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# THOUGHTS AND TALKS





# Thoughts and Talks

1935-7

THE DIARY OF  
A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

BY

Sir ARNOLD WILSON

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LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.  
LONDON ♦ NEW YORK ♦ TORONTO

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4

CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA

53 NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY

36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

114 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO

88 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

215 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

*First Published 1938*

*Printed in Great Britain*

**To**  
**MY CONSTITUENTS**  
**OF ALL**  
**POLITICAL PERSUASIONS**

‘ A MAN who goes into the actual battles of the political world must prepare himself much as he would for the struggle in any other branch of life. He must be prepared to meet men of far lower ideals than his own, and to face things, not as he would wish them, but as they are. He must not lose his own high ideals, and yet he must face the fact that the majority of the men with whom he must work have lower ideals. He must stand firmly for what he believes, and yet he must realise that political action, to be effective, must be the joint action of many men, and that he must sacrifice somewhat of his own opinion to those of his associates, if he ever hopes to see his desires take practical shape.

‘ It is not the man who sits by his fireside reading his evening paper and saying how bad our politics and politicians are, who will ever do anything to save us. It is the man who goes out into the rough hurly-burly of the caucus, the primary, and the political meeting, and there faces his fellows on equal terms. The real service is rendered, not by the critic who stands aloof from the contest, but by the man who enters into it and bears his part as a man should, undeterred by the blood and sweat. It is a pleasant thing to associate merely with cultivated and refined men of high ideals and sincere purpose to do right. . . . The actual battle must be fought out on other and less pleasant fields. The actual advance must be made in the field of practical politics, among the men who represent, or guide, or control the mass of voters, the men who are sometimes rough and coarse, who sometimes have lower ideals than they should, but who are capable, masterful, and efficient. It is only by mingling on equal terms with such men . . . that it is possible for one to establish a standing that will be useful to him in fighting for a great reform.’

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

in *The Forum*, July 1904.

## PREFACE

THIS book is a sequel, in some ways, to *Walks and Talks*, in which I repeated conversations heard and recorded views formed, for the most part among my constituents, between August 1933 and March 1934, and to *Walks and Talks Abroad*, which dealt with things seen and heard in Europe from May 1934 to June 1936. The period covered by the present volume is from April 1935 to September 1937: it does not purport to be a complete record, nor to refer, however superficially, to many of the principal events at home and abroad during those months. It is a subjective, rather than objective, record of the impression left on my mind by events which have interested me and personalities with whom I have come in contact.

The writer, like other men, has a natural bias, derived from past experience, present occupation, and his friends and acquaintances in many walks of life. No one can write without bias of matters about which he cares greatly, or of a faith held with conviction. I have sought to reproduce faithfully the words and spirit of those with whom I have talked: I have seldom recorded my own replies, and I beg my readers not to assume that I either accept the facts or the outlook of those with whom I spoke, unless I say so explicitly.

This tale of things seen and heard, mingled with reflections of my own, and seasoned with a few facts and parallels from the records of earlier days, contains nothing that is new. It is an honest endeavour to present people and their problems in the light in which they appeared to me at the moment, and to give some idea to the reader of the many-sidedness of modern life. Some most

important aspects of life have found no place in these pages—of doctors, nurses and schoolmasters, public assistance committees and county and rural district councils, football and cricket, dramatic societies and whist drives, territorials and special constables—of these and much else I have had nothing to say, but not because I do not realise the part they play in the life of a community.

Though I have spent the greater part of my working life in the harness of Government abroad, I am at heart far more interested in domestic than in foreign affairs, feeling that foreign policy must in the long run be decided by 'the state of the nation' at home.

I hold with Lord Baldwin that 'the true postulate of democracy is not equality but the faith that every man and woman is worth-while,' which I understand to imply that the welfare of the individual must, in the urbanised, ordered, wage-regulated society in which we live, be increasingly the concern of official bodies and of private persons.

I am no believer in Fascism as a policy suited to our needs, though I believe that Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany have done great things for those countries, and like Communism in Soviet Russia and dictatorial Governments in Persia, Turkey, Poland, Austria and other States, are likely to be permanent, though subject like everything else to change and growth.

As I wrote in *Walks and Talks* four years ago, 'I believe in Parliamentary Government, and in a representative system based primarily as at present upon territorial divisions. I should oppose attempts from whatever quarter to introduce an autocracy. The people of these islands are able, as are no other, to pronounce judgement upon public issues placed fairly before them. The middle-class is larger in proportion than in any other country in Europe. The average working-man to-day lives on a higher level than his forefathers; his outlook is wider. He is moved less by tradition and more by

argument, and is better able than his predecessors to exercise his duties as an elector—if he desires to take those duties seriously. The smaller demand for heavy manual labour and the greater use of machines have, in fact, created a different type of mind, and are changing the national character.'

I have little belief in migration as an aid to the solution of our domestic problems or those of the Dominions. Its immediate effect would be to accentuate the already ominous fall of the birth-rate. I believe that we should be chary of investing further capital sums abroad and that we should concentrate on restoring our own countryside in preference to exporting our wealth, in whatever form, to aid in the development of other lands by men not of our own race. Every pound of extra value produced from our own soil and from our mines and quarries and fisheries is newly created wealth.

The desire to marry and to beget children is as strong as ever, but, unless a man is unemployed, his remuneration is fixed without reference to the number of persons dependent on him, as the legal head of the family. To bring up children who will maintain the state of the world by providing sustenance for the generation which precedes them should be recognised as a social duty no less essential now than in former times. It is a sound principle to base a man's wages on the market value of the work he performs. To 'produce' a family of healthy children is the most valuable and necessary of all services that men and women can render to their fellows. This aspect of public policy has been overshadowed by other aspects of social endeavour. It should be re-examined with a view to adoption as a national policy, beginning by a system of family allowances in all public services.

Meanwhile the State should cease to penalise married couples through the operations of income-tax laws and otherwise. It is unjust, unreasonable, and contrary to national interests that a man and his mother, or a brother and sister, living together should be separately assessed,



whilst the incomes of a married man and his wife should be treated as one. There should be much more generous allowances for income-tax purposes, both for wives and for children, with a specific additional allowance when the children's education is not a charge upon the public.

Whilst I have twice stood for election as a National Conservative, and owe unreserved allegiance to the leader of the Conservative Party, I do not profess or desire to be very much of a party man. My instinct and experience, such as it is, leads me, in some measure, to the Right abroad and to the Left at home, for I am more in sympathy with Disraeli, the Tory Radical,<sup>1</sup> in his outlook on society than with any of his successors. I look upon the nation not as an aggregate of individuals but as the product of the real relationships connecting men and women in the infinitely various walks of life which give savour and richness to our civilisation.

There is abroad among us a deep belief that justice demands that the relative difference between various categories of the population should be smaller or, at least, less obvious. This desire to spread the butter of enjoyment more evenly over the bread of necessity is as 'real' as any set of figures, and more significant, and it is not restricted to men and women of any age or party.

I seek, and am confident that I shall find, in the policy of the present Government, under the guidance of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, a truly national policy which will voice this feeling and give it legislative shape. Thus alone can we secure, in the words of Lord Baldwin, 'opportunities for that direct expression of human personality which is freedom, for that diversity of employment and enjoyment which is the only tolerable form of equality, and that association of all the elements in our society which is fraternity.'

ARNOLD WILSON.

<sup>1</sup> *The Tory Radical*—Disraeli's political development illustrated from his original writings and speeches. H. W. J. Edwards (Cape).

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# THOUGHTS AND TALKS

## CHAPTER I

APRIL 1935

The writers of to-day waste their energy in describing human rarities. . . . Since they themselves have shut themselves off from life, leave them and go where there are men. Show the life of every day to the men and women of every day ; that life is deeper and more vast than the sea. The smallest among you bears the infinite in his soul. . . .

Write the simple life of one of these simple men. . . . Write it simply. . . . Waste no thought upon the words. . . . You are addressing all men ; use the language of all men. . . . The style in the soul.

JEAN CHRISTOPHE, iv. 28.

THE Smoking Room of the House of Commons is not large : some Members are often to be seen there, others seldom ; many never enter it, but prefer the Library as a place of repose when they are not reading or working or listening to debates. Some Ministers and some of the Party Whips visit it regularly and talk freely over a cup of tea or coffee or, later in the evening, a glass of beer ; others have never entered it. The late Prime Minister, as Mr. Baldwin, went there almost every day ; Sir John Simon plays chess there with his political opponents and others. Members of the Upper House have the right of entry and, if they were formerly Members of the House of Commons, are often to be seen there.

Conversation is privileged : Members may, and frequently do, discuss with the utmost freedom a matter which is about to be debated with those by whom they will be answered, with the knowledge that advantage will not be taken, in debate, of admissions made or doubts voiced. Such exchanges of view help to clarify the issue

and to concentrate discussion on real differences rather than on subsidiary matters. I was sitting round a table one day, listening to Mr. Lloyd George describing with youthful zest his own experience twenty years ago when piloting through choppy Parliamentary seas the first National Health Insurance Act, when a messenger wearing 'the chains'—the honourable badge worn by those attendants who are authorised to enter the Chamber, and any other room in the House—handed me a green card, sent in by a stranger. I went to the Outer Lobby to see who wanted me.

My client was a woman, not a constituent, seeking advice. A little over two years ago her son had been sent to a Home Office school (formerly called a Reformatory or Industrial School) for three years for having had a child, when he was just sixteen, by a girl just under that age. After two exemplary years at the school, during which he won all the best prizes, he was released on licence to do a year's course at a technical school. He did one term there, and earned a good report. Then, quite suddenly, in the middle of the second term, he made an excuse to go home, where he placed before his mother a form which, he said, the school wanted her to fill up before he returned. She signed it, she admitted, without looking. Thus armed (with the written permission of his surviving parent to marry) he went to the registry office and married the girl, who had similarly tricked her parents into giving their written consent.

He knew that a condition of his licence, and of pupilage at the school, was that he should not marry, but forgot the consequences. He, a married man with a wife and child, was at once sent back to the school which he had so joyfully left.

His mother was keeping the wife, and paying for his keep, and the child was in an orphanage, and now—three months later—it was known that another child was coming. Could I help to secure his release? I advised

an appeal to the Home Office, which was successful. I had said to the mother, I fear rather half-heartedly, that if the young couple wished me to help, I would do what I could. A few weeks later came a request from the youth for an interview. I received him at the House of Commons after his working hours, and took him on to the Terrace. He was not the uncouth, furtive type I half expected to see, but tall and handsome, with clean hands and an open face, looking straight into my eyes as he spoke. He felt that he had a just grievance against laws which had so long separated him from the girl who was now his wife: if he had broken several laws in marrying her later that was only 'tit for tat.' He had known nothing of 'this under 16 rule': they had always meant to marry as soon as they knew a child was coming along, and if they had been let alone they would have got married as soon as she was turned sixteen, and he could have given her a home, for he was earning good money and his widowed mother would have gladly had them both in her house. As things were, the police and the bench had 'nigh broken them both': she had been sent as an under-cook in a distant city, the baby sent to an orphanage, and he to an Approved School. The moment he was sent to a technical school he had written to the girl—all their letters up to that time had been stopped—and got her to take private service near by. And then—well, what could one expect? It is the way things happen. She did not want to have another baby 'off the strength': she did not want to get into trouble with her employer, or her parents—she had had enough of that last time. So he thought the best thing to do was to 'chance his arm' and to cut the Gordian Knot and tie another: this time he had got her 'for keeps.' All he really needed, he explained naïvely, was a 'character': his old testimonials, which he had with him, were no good. She could not get maternity benefit and he could not draw the dole: they would not submit to the

inquisition of a Public Assistance Committee. He had no use for charitable societies—‘their noses were too long.’ Given a job he would keep it and wipe out the past. He had an uncle who had done well in Australia, but with a wife and a ‘pigeon pair’ of babies, as he hoped—for the first was a girl—a job abroad would not do. He had a trade: he was already an ‘improver.’ The Headmaster of the Approved School was a good man and would, he thought, speak well of him. I told him to return in a week’s time and bring his wife; meanwhile I would see what I could do.

A week later they took tea with me, again on the Terrace. She too was good-looking, strong, well built, looking nearer twenty than eighteen: she was shy at first but not shamefaced. They had been in love since they left school: her father was an army pensioner and she one of four children. The baby, which she had recovered from the Home, was the joy of her life: now she was married she did not mind having another. ‘It was all my fault,’ she said frankly, ‘I made Fred leave the school to marry me; I just couldn’t go on. All we want now is a job for him.’

A friendly manager of an Employment Exchange, after a personal interview, found him a place in life: I continued my enquiries. His birth certificate showed him to be illegitimate. When I next saw him I asked him who his father was: he gave the name of his mother’s dead husband: I showed him the certificate. He was surprised. His mother had never told him; she had been a good mother to them all—he was one of five—and it would make no difference to him, but he would ask her what was the reason.

He came back a month later to tell me. It transpired that her first husband had deserted her when she was only eighteen, a few months after marriage. He had gone abroad, or died—anyway she had never heard of him again. Three years later his father had asked her to

marry him: she had told him that she was 'tied up to the other man': he had solved the question by doing without a marriage certificate, and for sixteen years, till his death, they had lived as man and wife. The only snag was that she could not get a widow's pension without her 'marriage lines,' which was unjust, but such was the law. On looking up the figures of illegitimate births and affiliation orders later, I found that against some 26,000 illegitimate births in any one year only about 6000 affiliation orders are even applied for, whilst of all illegitimate births in Manchester only 58 per cent. were first children in 1932-35. The remainder were second, third or fourth or fifth children, showing what a large number of children, registered as illegitimate, are members of families, living as such and probably more often than not illegitimate only because one parent is without the means to obtain a divorce from a spouse who has long ago disappeared, or because the state of the law does not permit divorce for desertion.

These facts increased my anxiety so to amend our Marriage Laws as to make wilful desertion, as in Scotland and most civilised countries, a ground for divorce.<sup>1</sup>

I did not see the youth again for 18 months, though he wrote regularly. When I last heard from him he was earning good money, with three children in his quiver, and 'happy all day.' A few weeks before finishing this book I invited them to tea again after a *matinée* for which I sent them tickets. They were a cheerful healthy couple, as reminiscent of hard times in the past as if twenty years had elapsed, with photographs of the children in his pocket-book and many schemes for the future. Such couples are the salt of the earth and deserve marriage allowances.

I left St. Pancras one Sunday afternoon to speak to a 'Political School' at Buxton—a pleasant journey of four

<sup>1</sup> This has since been achieved.



and a half hours. I selected as my travelling companions two youths whom I saw putting a cycle tandem into the guard's van of the express. They were pals, employed on maintenance work all over England by a London firm of engineers. The tandem carried kit and tools. The firm encouraged them to travel thus, and they had a list of thirty-two counties thus visited in three years: they were connoisseurs of scenery and industrial efficiency, of cheap inns and lodgings of seaside resorts and spas. But they had another interest in which they were almost childishly absorbed. They had a notebook in which they recorded systematically the number of every railway engine they saw, in its proper class, each with a careful technical description. It is a game which railway companies might popularise with advantage.

The 'school' at Buxton was well attended; I entered the hotel at 8, began to speak at 8.30, and left for Stockport by car soon after 10, in heavy rain, to catch the 11.40 for Euston. I sought a pillow and blanket which are lent to travellers at one shilling each per night—a magnificent rate of interest—but the porter laughed at me. 'Stockport lads don't wrap up o' nights,' said he, 'there's no demand.' 'What about a pillow?' I asked. 'The lasses use the lads as a pillow and the lads use each other,' he replied. 'No pillows for them.' I entered the dirty waiting-room: the fire was almost out: the grate (why not a stove?) broken. The train was fairly full, but I found a third-class carriage with one spare corner—the others occupied by young soldiers returning from leave in Lancashire, and a sergeant in civilian clothes. We soon got talking. He had seen service in France and hoped darkly—his companions assenting—that we should be 'on the right side next time,' and better equipped than we were then, or now.

'What of unemployment in Lancashire?' I asked. He replied, a little diffidently at first, glancing at the youths whom he did not wish to offend, that there was a

lot about, but he had been recruiting last year and the year before, and what worried him was the great number of healthy youngsters who preferred the dole to the Army. They feared not death but hard work, not exile but discipline.

‘Isn’t that it?’ he asked the boy opposite him, who came from Manchester but looked as if he came from the moors.

‘There’s some of them like that,’ was the reply, ‘and a lot of older men that are no good to anyone. One in every four that’s on the dole either wouldn’t work if they could or couldn’t work if they would—all ages and all sorts.’

‘I often think,’ continued the sergeant, ‘that if a man could chuck the Army whenever he liked and join up again when he felt like it we’d have a lot of unemployment and a lot of men on the dole. We’ll never get things to rights till there’s some compulsion somewhere. “Work or maintenance” is all right but, says I, that means it’s compulsory to work, whether you like the job or not, same as in the Army. Every town ought to have some test work to put men on: it mightn’t pay but it would be good for them.’

The talk turned to physical inefficiency of recruits. He put much of it down to smoking too much—a direct cause of caries through acidity, so a dentist had told him. Much dental and other trouble was due to neglect after leaving the elementary school. The way boys forgot what they learned there, he added, was amazing: by the time they enlisted many could scarcely read or write better than a ten-year-old. Nearly all put on weight and breadth after six months in the Army, and the Army Schools soon raised the general standard of competence in the three Rs.

The young soldiers, encouraged by free talk, asked me questions about India, whither they were due soon to sail. They had relations who had seen half the world through a barrack window or from the deck of a battle-

ship. They had been pestered with good advice and had been reading the daily papers. 'Was India all right?' I reassured them.

Silence came over us all and sleep over the young men. We let them lie prone, the sergeant and I facing each other stiffly in opposite corners.

'We're old hands,' he murmured; 'they need sleep more'n we do. They'll get what's coming to 'em when they get into barracks again, but I wish there was three-decker sleepers for third class—six in a compartment and no extra charge. A night sitting up in a train is a day lost to me.'

At 4.30 we reached Euston and stepped out stiffly into the cold air, to be cheered by a bright sign announcing that the refreshment room was open. It was open, but the radiators were cold; a boy of fifteen or sixteen, who should have been in bed, was struggling to provide tea or coffee from a pair of urns to a queue of nearly a hundred passengers. There was no warm or appetising food; only railway buns and biscuits. Some of us, tired of waiting, sought the street where coffee stalls, not yet legislated out of existence by the local authorities, are old-fashioned enough to cater for popular needs at a price cheaper by far than in the railway buffet, where a cold boiled egg is 4d. I took the three soldiers five minutes' walk to a stall I knew. Coffee, saveloys, hot pies, banbury cakes and a multitude of other delicacies awaited us; under a bright light a genial stall keeper served us like customers, not suppliants. How different from the buffet ladies! We shook hands presently and parted regretfully; all soldiers have something in common.

A few days later I just caught the last train to town. It was already moving fast as a young philistine leaped into the carriage with the skill born of practice. 'How far are you travelling?' I asked.

'To Ilford; that's where I live.'

' And work ? '

' No ; my job's in town.'

' Is Ilford to your liking ? '

' Yes ; it's so hard to get in and out of it these days, with the crowds in the trains and the buses, that it's becoming more of a home. Shops as good as any in London and cheaper sometimes. When I first went they were only on one side of High Street, now it's all shops both sides. Big cinemas, enough to hold everyone, and all the good films. There's no need for anyone to go to town to get what they want.'

A topic of importance which was being discussed in Parliament during the month was ' Ribbon Development.' The debates, and heated correspondence in *The Times*, showed a unanimity which concealed the real difficulties. The fact is that many, probably half, the houses built ' in ribbons ' are owned by local authorities. Almost none would have been built along main roads had not sewers and water-mains, and often gas and electric light and power services, been laid down in or along the roads expressly to provide for such developments, often with money borrowed for the purpose.

Such houses are not unpopular : they are less liable to be overlooked than houses on new estates, where every back garden is overlooked from half a score of upper windows. The omnibus services are at the front door, the silent countryside at the back ; they are relatively cheap, and every shilling on the rent is a shilling less for the table.

Much land adjoining highways has been sold by local authorities to private builders for development, often with reasonable covenants and subject to building and ' improvement ' lines : 2500 miles of roads have been thus protected up to March 31 last. The power to purchase land within 220 yards of the centre of the road has been vested in the Minister of Transport since 1925,

but almost never exercised, either on behalf of the central government or the county or local authorities who have long had power to purchase land abutting on a road. The cost has proved too great, and the public at large are not interested. Parliament may pass an Act giving County Councils power to deprive landowners of access from their land to highways, and perhaps power to fix a building line, but County Councils, on financial grounds, will be slow to act.

The complaint that motorists cannot enjoy the countryside as they career along the highways, because local workmen are living in houses on either side, is not entirely sincere, especially when it is accompanied by a brazen demand for higher speeds. We must remember that those who live in the houses on highways can and do enjoy what they can see of the country. The proper remedy is to promote more garden cities like Letchworth and Wythenshawe, where men and women can find not only a home but a living.

Since the war the Commissioners of Crown Lands have rebuilt Oxford Circus without adding a yard to the roadway, which is no broader than when Nash designed it. There is in consequence no room for access by subway to the Tube Station. No one protested. The Corporation of the City of London allowed rebuilding opposite the Mansion House, rejecting the last chance of relieving the worst traffic block in Europe. The adjoining landowners asked and obtained from the valuer vast sums for the tiny strip surrendered; so long as similar obtuseness is visible in every large town, impoverished farmers and owners of agricultural land, which has some value as a building site, are entitled to ask that they shall have no less equitable treatment than is accorded to investors in office and shop sites in our great cities.

I went to Leicester one day to address a Rotarian luncheon-club — an American institution, which has

found in this country favourable soil for rapid growth. Here speakers lose their appetites in finding their tongues. Rotary spares neither age nor sex. It was 'daughters' day,' and half the audience were young women. My subject, chosen before I knew this, was on 'Things Government cannot do,' and my text the lines that Samuel Johnson inserted in Oliver Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village':

In every government though terrors reign,  
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,  
How small of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!  
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,  
Our own felicity we make or find.

I criticised those who were demanding action by the State in every direction at once. I spoke of Lord Melchett's Enabling Bill and, partly by way of illustration, of chain-store shops, whose proprietors seem very favourably disposed, in some cases, to P.E.P. (Political and Economical Planning). Few of those who controlled these shops did anything to help forward the communal life of the towns in which they had branches. They had no personal relations with customers or staff. The business of distribution, so far as the local shop was concerned, was limited to receiving cash payment for a limited range of standardised articles. They took the 'bread and butter business,' leaving the task of serving customers who wished to exercise choice and discrimination to other shops. I was back in the House just too late to hear the Chancellor explain the Budget.

## CHAPTER II

MAY 1935

Because the spirit of man cannot demean itself lively in this body without some recreating intermission of labour and serious things, it were happy for the commonwealth if our magistrates, as in those famous governments of old, would take into their care . . . the managing of our public sports and festival pastimes that they might be . . . such as would inure and harden our bodies . . . and may civilize, adorn, and make discreet our minds.

MILTON. *Against Prelaty*, ii. (1641).

THE Jubile, to use for once the spelling of the word in Leviticus xxv, whence we derive it, was ordained to the children of Israel as a holy year of thanksgiving in which they were 'to proclaim liberty,' release bondmen, and relieve their poorer brethren. There is still a need for a periodical cancellation of debts, but the Jubilee is to-day, in our minds, an appanage of long royal reigns. The monarchy is an essential and inseparable element of democracy as we know it: it has been given to King George to strengthen it in this country at a moment when it had wilted or perished elsewhere. The King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council is the magnet which enables men under many governments, but of the same mettle, to come together and remain united. The King's sons, travelling freely and widely, have carried the royal tradition to the most distant parts, and have also acquired, like the Queen, a knowledge of every aspect of our national life which few commoners, and none of their age, can claim. To her, and to them also, in this year of Jubilee, we are grateful as we count our blessings.

The Jubilee celebrations in London served as an outlet for the widespread desire of men and women in every walk of life to show in their own way their loyalty to King George and Queen Mary, whose personal popularity has perhaps been insufficiently stressed, and to the idea of national unity for which the Royal Family stands. No discomfort was unbearable to the happy folk who lined the streets, and amid the cheers there were tears of joy and thankfulness.

The procession itself was almost wholly domestic. There were no detachments from the Indian Army, nor of Dominion or Colonial Forces: no place was found for units of the Royal Navy or Royal Air Force; indeed, when the plan was made, almost no troops were included. There were no representatives of foreign countries in the procession, yet it would have done them good to have passed through the streets. Only one Embassy—over which the Nazi Haken Kreuz flies—was within sight of the line of march: it was gaily decorated, as part of a scheme embracing the whole of Carlton House Terrace.

Outside the City and West End the decorations were scarcely less gay and far more spontaneous. Many streets in Hoxton, Dalston and Shoreditch, strongholds of militant Socialism, were brilliant with flags, and in those parts of England where local left-wing politicians had been busy crying down the Jubilee, notably at Nelson and Abertillery, popular resentment against disloyal kill-joys in office came to the surface. If the villages of Hertfordshire are any guide to the rest of rural England, the Jubilee will be a memory treasured alike in the schools, the public-houses and the almshouses, as well as by the public at large. Decorations were to be seen everywhere—on the spokes of boys' bicycles, on church towers, and in every shop window except those of the multiple-shop, chain-store and co-operative type. In my own village the fishmonger, unable to paint his shop front by day, spent all night doing it by candlelight so that it should be



a resplendent and integral part of the gala dress of High Street.

For weeks past our intellectuals have been criticising the Jubilee in their chosen organs. How hard on the King! How clearly designed to give the National Government an advantage at the next election! How extravagant! The event has shown, as usual, how little such folk understand England. Those who seek to equate left-wing opinions with churlishness do an ill-service to those for whom they profess to speak. How splendidly George Lansbury towered above the peevish little penmen when, in the House of Commons on May 8, he seconded the motion for a loyal address to His Majesty.

The Jubilee Celebrations were exceedingly popular: 'I call it a silver wedding,' said one old lady, 'between the King and the dear Queen and the country': it was kept in that spirit, as a domestic occasion with no political or constitutional connotations whatever. Those who remembered the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, and some who were old enough to remember the rejoicings of 1887, were moved, as are most Englishmen, by this fresh evidence of continuity. Rejoicings were more widespread than on any previous occasion, and more spontaneous. Great numbers of men and women had been deeply moved by the King's Christmas broadcasts: they felt the King and Queen to be in some mystical way the embodiment of man's ideals of national life: no breath of scandal had touched them. They were the servants of the people, who repaid their devotion with service and their service with affection. The village churches were as crowded on the appropriate Sunday as for a Harvest Festival, and sang *Nun danket alle Gott* in Winkworth's translation:

Now thank we all our God  
With heart and hands and voices  
Who wondrous things hath done  
In whom His world rejoices,

Who from our mother's arms  
Hath blessed us on our way.

O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be with us  
With ever joyful heart,  
And blessed peace to cheer us  
And keep us in His grace  
And guide us when perplexed.

*Regnavit deus, irascantur populi* : 'The Lord is King, be the people never so unquiet' was the text of the sermon to which I listened that Sunday and, as I walked home across the fields with some choir-men, they spoke of the King with a depth of feeling rare in Englishmen. 'He has done his job fine,' said one, and 'She's a wonderful old lady,' said another.

'It must be a hard life : I remember him during the war : He knocked off liquor, that's more than us chaps ever did.' 'And she's always about doing things, and standing so straight, too.' 'God bless 'em both, I say : we're lucky to have them.'

The Jubilee gave an opportunity—almost the first since the Armistice—for a public release of communal emotion of which every community, conscious of fundamental unity, stands in need. Our Rector did well to choose the Psalm 'Behold, now, what a good and joyful thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.' I have seen this emotional release in Germany often enough to realise that it is welcomed and shared to the full by many who have little interest in the events which are being celebrated. We need it just as much in this country, but there are few occasions on which we can, without feeling self-conscious, make such a display. Religious festivals have lost much of their appeal, and we are the poorer thereby. Time was when Christmas at the turn of the year, and Easter, harbinger of spring, were

times of rejoicing, wisely heralded by the appropriate seasons of preparation. The festivals of both, of physical death and of spiritual rebirth, are as old as mankind and are understood by those who have no knowledge of ecclesiastical tradition. The Harvest Festival is unknown to the Book of Common Prayer: as a religious observance it is not a hundred years old. But it is kept to-day in church in deference to widespread desire in country districts to give thanks for 'the timely fruits of the earth.' The Minister of Education, charged as he now is with responsibility for furthering physical recreation, would do well to ponder Milton's words of advice which are reproduced at the head of this chapter.

But to return to the Jubilee: it has to be recorded, in retrospect, with regret, that the Jubilee Trust Fund did not arouse enthusiasm or attain anything approaching the total sum hoped for. Excluding the large contributions of commercial firms, and a few large individual donations, the amounts subscribed by the general public were smaller than had been hoped. It was not the fault of the organisers, who enlisted the aid of the B.B.C. and launched a great advertising campaign. The then Prince of Wales, who inaugurated the Trust on March 1, declared that 'nothing would give the King and Queen so much pleasure as a national thank-offering devoted to the welfare of the rising generation' in order that, in his late Majesty's own words a few months later, 'many of them may be helped in body, mind and character to become future citizens.' It was, he said, to be a Trust 'to extend the activities of the existing and proved voluntary organisations.'

By March 31, 1936, nearly £1,000,000 had been raised, but as it was constituted as a perpetual trust and was at once invested, the actual amount available annually was only about £35,000.

The public soon realised, when the Fund began to work, that it would not be available for large capital

outlays. The money was locked up—invested not in playing fields or gymnasiums, or club houses for boys and girls, but in a ‘gilt-edged’ market already glutted with idle money. Of a hundred pounds handed to the Fund only £10 or so would be spent in the next three years.

Those who desired action, here and now, were well advised to choose some other channel for their beneficence. All round London houses are springing up over thousands of acres, with little or no provision for playing fields or recreation of any sort; land in such areas doubles and trebles in value almost overnight.

There was, too, a feeling that the importance of playing fields was being overstressed: the number of boys who can or will play cricket or football more than once a week is small, and these are not games for girls. Cricket and football are wasteful of space: it is impossible, quite impossible, for boys from fourteen to eighteen to travel some miles to get to a recreation ground. They must have a place close at hand, and available in wet weather or in fine, in winter as well as in summer. Few local authorities or institutes allow games of any sort on Sundays.

I left shortly after the Jubilee for a tour in Germany, and a week later visited Hamburg, where I delivered an address in honour of the German Ambassador in London, the late Herr Sthamer, whose tenure of office from 1920 to 1930 covered a period of growing amity between the two countries. I spoke also, in Königsberg University, of the Jubilee Celebrations before a great audience consisting of officials, professors and students.

‘You have confidence in your great leaders,’ I began, and paused for applause, which was forthcoming, adding, ‘and we have confidence in ourselves, and who shall say that our confidence is less justified than yours?’

‘You have achieved national unity in four years of strenuous effort, crowned with success;’ and I paused again for another round of applause, adding again, ‘and

we have achieved unity in four hundred years, and who shall say that our unity, for which we once fought, and which is not apparent, is less real than yours, of which I have received such ample ocular testimony?'

There was a movement among the students to see how the great men on the front bench received these 'anti-theta,' as Bacon called them, but they looked at me impassively.

I need not here repeat what I saw and heard in Germany, for I have chronicled it elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> I was back ten days later grinding at the mill, passing through the Division Lobbies (silence is a golden virtue in Parliament), sitting on Committees upstairs for long hours, addressing meetings in the constituency and sometimes elsewhere.

I also spent many hours reading current political literature of the less ephemeral kind. I began with Douglas Jerrold's *England*,<sup>2</sup> which has all the vigour of his classic pamphlet *The Lie about the War*, which bears re-reading now, for the wheel has turned full-circle. *England* is chastening reading for Tories and Socialists alike, and not keyed in a hopeful note, for he regards the post-war 'organisation for peace' as doomed to failure because organised on a statistical, not moral basis. A thing is not right because a majority at Geneva or elsewhere vote in its favour: moral standards must have a basis in individual and national convictions. John Bull's place has been taken, like Uncle Sam's, by Strube's little man—a bewildered, helpless city-bred slave. I turned to Mr. Attlee's *Will and Way to Socialism*,<sup>3</sup> which sets out to explain not *why* the Socialists, like the Communists, 'challenge the whole basis of society in this country and the world,' but *how*, by democratic methods, they will take the next step. He proclaims that 'the Age of Abundance has begun—that poverty can be a thing of the

<sup>1</sup> See *Walks and Talks Abroad*, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Arrowsmith.

<sup>3</sup> Methuen.

past if we so determine.' I would fain believe him, but man does not live by abundance—by bread alone—and planners, whatever their party colour, seem likely to deprive the 'man in the street' of many things that he values more than the prospect, or even the certainty, of a little more of everything.

Mr. Attlee considers that Government must control the mechanism of external trade, of finance, and of our basic industries.

The Tory view, as I understand it and preach it, is very different: perhaps I may state it briefly here. The Tory creed recognises the value of tradition, but realises that whatever is living is subject to change, and whatever has lost the power of change has lost the power of adaptation and, in a changing world, must die. The function of the State is to give every citizen protection from danger from without and oppression from within, to guard the rights of the individual who, in the Christian ethical system, is an end in himself as well as a link in the great chain of humanity. He must live in society, but in a society so organised as to give full weight and value to human personality. The forces now working for change are deeper than those of the Industrial or the French Revolution. They are akin to those of the Renaissance-Reformation upheaval; with its sudden diffusion of knowledge and its enlarged conception of space, its break with traditional religion, its exaltation of the power of the State and its birth of a new social order.

The radio and the motor, and the vast development of automatic machinery, have done more to shape the State than anyone could have foreseen. The Tory is not blind to these things: he intends to guide them, to ride the storm, and not to be beaten down by it. He prefers State guidance to State control and State control to State ownership, but his preferences are pragmatic. If private enterprise does its job well, it will be encouraged to continue: if it fails, in any particular instance, it must be

subjected to guidance and, if need be, to control. But this is not the place for a homily.

After a political meeting in the Midlands in one of the new Council estates I found myself at Snow Hill Station, in Birmingham, waiting for the midnight train. I sought the refreshment-room. I had not been there long before a naval rating entered, bearing round his cap the ribbon of a sloop well known to me in the Persian Gulf during and after the war. We fell at once to talking over coffee and sandwiches: Muscat, Bahrain, Henjam and Basrah; consuls and politicals, soldiers and Indian Marine—we had a whole world in common, in which we had both played our part at almost the same age, for my days in those waters began in 1907 when I was twenty-three, his when he was twenty-one.

The talk turned to India and the merits of the Army and Navy as a career. There was much that he liked in the Army: his was a military family with a tradition dating back to the Peninsular Wars, and he had a brother in a line regiment now in India. The Army had two faults. A boy could stay at school till fifteen and then go straight to the Navy—as he had done, but almost no one was accepted for the Army till he was seventeen and a half or eighteen. The other point went deeper. There was too much drill in the Army: the gap between officers and men was bigger, and kept wide open by sergeants and sergeant-majors who did not care who gave the orders as long as they had the power. The result was that Navy men were, by the age of twenty-one, a better lot than private soldiers, though they all started level. Military service was too short for those who loved it, but too long for those who wished to get out. Above all, there was too much of the sergeant-major; on this matter he and his brother thought alike. The Army wanted a change of method, and a change of heart too: fewer inspections of brass buttons and pipeclay, more of

the informality which made life in the Navy a choice he seldom if ever regretted. He talked good sense and his views deserve attention. But he would not have been a good witness before a Departmental Committee or a Royal Commission.

By this time we had reached Reading—at 2 A.M.: he left the train on his way to Portsmouth, and I curled up to sleep till I was turned out at Paddington, where I searched in vain for a bite or sup or a seat in a waiting-room—how unlike the great railway stations of Europe.

I hastened from the House of Commons, after two hours in Standing Committee, to catch the 2.10 from King's Cross to my constituency. I noticed a group of young men, clearly strangers to London, each with his bag. I listened to their speech. They were talking Welsh. It was Thursday, so they were not footballers.

'You for Letchworth?' said I.

'Oo, aye,' said they in chorus.

'Going to the Training Centre?'

'Oo, aye,' came the chorus again.

'I know the place,' said I; 'the manager's a good man and there's good teaching to be got. You'll like it.'

'We've got to like it,' replied one. 'It's go there or get struck off at the "labour".'

'What trades do they learn a man?' asked a bright-eyed youth, wearing a paternal R.A.S.C. cap badge in his button-hole.

'Bricklayer, plasterer, painter and decorator, carpenter, machinist, fitter, body-builder, panel-beater, welder,' I ran through the list.

'Which is the best paid?'

'The best is, to my mind, the most regular. They're not training more men in any one line than they can place. There's no bricklayers and few plasterers out of a job these days, and not so many painters as was.'



‘Where’ll they send a man? Anywhere?’

‘Most anywhere, but they’ll try to send you near where you come from if there’s a demand. They might send you fellows to Bristol, for example.’ (They were all from Pontypridd.)

The train came in, and when it stopped the door of the buffet car was opposite them. They entered with their bags and took their seats. I followed. Once started, the attendant asked what they would take. ‘Nothing,’ was the answer; ‘we’ve brought our own.’ The attendant began to explain, and the embarrassed youths exchanged a few words with each other in Welsh. Wishing to put them and the steward at their ease, I ordered a cup of tea and a sandwich all round. They accepted it with well-bred dignity. We passed through the last tunnel and came to open fields.

‘It’s terrible flat country,’ said one. ‘I’ve been looking out for mountains like we’ve got in Wales, but there’s none. I like to see a mountain at the back of a place.’

‘We’ve passed through seven tunnels,’ said I—‘that means seven hills; and here’s a viaduct, as high and long as any in England, I believe.’

They looked admiringly at old Welwyn below us, but were not beaten.

‘There’s a bigger bridge than this near our place, and a better view too.’

The talk turned to football; then to Letchworth. Were there plenty of cinemas? Were there talkies? What other towns could a man visit? Could you get to a dance on a Saturday? Were the lodgings good? By the time I had answered their questions we reached Hitchin and I wished them goodbye and good luck. They replied politely—with a proper reserve. They were stout-hearted lads, but not one had been out of Wales before. It was as great an adventure for them as going to a boarding-school for the first time.

After long hours spent in the House listening to the debate on the Unemployment Assistance (Temporary Provisions) (No. 2) Bill, I walked up Whitehall to Trafalgar Square. Opposite the National Gallery a crowd of nearly a hundred youths had collected, forming a queue—one of the strongest instincts of our race (notably absent at a railway ticket office in France during 'rush' hours). Presently a van marked 'Feed the Hungry' drove up and distributed slabs of bread and margarine. Each man took his portion and ate it hungrily, but it was not a square meal. Not one of them had a cigarette, but they were mostly cheerful and talkative. One group of three, standing apart from the rest as they ate, attracted my notice. They were not at home in such surroundings. Their faces betrayed a different and higher standard of education. They wore their clothes differently, but their boots were worn. I spoke to them. They were all three seamen from the same ship, now sold to the United States. 'We've been "driven off the Atlantic",' they remarked, 'and we're here for the Jubilee; it'll be something to see the King in naval uniform, to remind us that ships and sailors and the sea used to matter more than anything else to old England.' They were not penniless; but the seamen's homes were full: they would not go to a lodging-house. It was not so cold that they could not sleep out and keep their pence. We went to the nearest Corner House where, in exchange for sausages and mash, they regaled me with fo'c'sle yarns covering half the world. I certainly had the better of the bargain. They were not sullen or down-hearted, but full of hope; for they were still in the prime and had some months' 'benefit' to draw, and some savings.

Second only to Mr. Lloyd George in his ability to stand on 'the mountains of memory, by the world's well-springs,' as Swinburne puts it, is Mr. Winston Churchill. Both are, in a sense, out of place on the back-benches.

They have both played great parts—Mr. Lloyd George the greatest—in our political history. Mr. Churchill has held almost every office but that of Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister, and left his mark upon them all. They are too independent, too forceful, to be entirely welcome as collaborators in any Cabinet: they are hard hitters in debate, and those who have encountered them remember, longer than the general public, how much experience and practical wisdom, and how little malice, lies behind their sallies. The arts of debate are not to be learned quickly; nor to be despised. Both are old Parliamentary hands, who were in the House before any member of the present Cabinet took their seats, and before most of them attained Ministerial rank.

That, in these circumstances, they continue to play an important and dignified part in debate, is a testimony to their public spirit: that they do not exercise greater influence is some indication of the strength of the party system. But they arouse very different emotions in the minds of their hearers. The Library and the Lobbies are emptied and the Chamber fills quickly when their names appear on the tape which, in every room, indicates the course of the debate: Mr. Lloyd George is listened to with respect, but is seldom interrupted. He is always worth listening to, but he is not followed. Mr. Churchill has a following: he can influence the course of debate, but he arouses opposition, and, in the course of the discussions on the India Bill this year, his unsparing criticism of the Government, inside and outside the House, would have had a greater effect upon members but for the impression, which I believe to be wholly untrue, that personal animosity inspired his attacks and that, in the words of Pope, he was one who

Made for the Universe, altered his mind  
And to Party gave up what was meant for mankind.

Years must elapse before anyone can judge retro-

spectively whether the India Act was a feat of statesmanship or fresh proof of the inability of British Ministers to realise that Western parliamentary institutions—already discredited in most parts of Europe—cannot be adapted to or adopted by Eastern peoples. I myself am certain—I have never for a moment doubted—that the system of parliamentary government set up in India will fail. I entered Parliament in 1933 pledged to an open mind till the Joint Select Committee had reported. Its Report did not convince me that the new form of government was in the interests of India, or of this country, but it satisfied me that we could not now go back on what we had so earnestly commended for the past fifty years. Like Mr. Churchill, I accept democracy, as did the lady who began a metaphysical essay with the declaration, ‘I accept the Universe,’ to which Carlyle replied, ‘By Gad, she’d better.’ But, like Mr. Churchill, I am a good deal more doubtful whether any democracy but our own believes in parliamentary institutions.<sup>1</sup>

I felt that ‘our honour rooted in dishonour stood’ and I held aloof during the long discussions on the India Bill, but voted for it. My propensities, as the old song puts it, were all the other way. We were in honour committed to the Bill: no alternative was possible; but the new Government would not work and would give place to something very different from and far less suited to the needs of India than the system we had painfully built up over a hundred years. I should have been far more comfortable in my mind sitting on Mr. Churchill’s bench and playing my part in attack; but I felt it to be useless, for we had gone too far along the road to be able to turn back. Indian Civil Servants assured me that I was right: the weight of argument was on their side and I followed it, but with a sore heart.

<sup>1</sup> *H.C. Debates*, February 11, 1935, vol. 297, col. 1650.

## CHAPTER III

JUNE 1935

Surely it is the wisdom of States to redress evils before they become intolerable, and their folly to wait for that ripeness of calamity, *cum nec mala ipsa nec eorum remedia ferre possumus*.<sup>1</sup>

W. E. GLADSTONE (1878)

in *The Nineteenth Century* (p. 200).

ASCENSION DAY fell this year on May 30: the three Rogation days which preceded it were marked by perfect weather. It was the beginning of the English summer and I was reminded, as I talked to some neighbours about local footpaths (which they wished to deny to strangers, who desecrated the ground with broken glass and tins, but to preserve them for the use of countrymen who use them to go to and from their work), that these Rogation days, which once served a very useful purpose, were clearly chosen because fair weather was likely at that point in the calendar. It was on Rogation days that, in almost every part of England, men 'perambulated for the oversight of the bounds and limits' of their respective towns, wards or parishes. A homily on the subject, dating from Edward VI and reprinted by Queen Elizabeth in 1562, calls upon men to 'consider the old ancient bounds and limits' belonging to their townships and to their neighbours. 'It is the part of every good Townsman, to preserve as much as lieth in him, the liberties, franchises,

<sup>1</sup> The Latin words are apparently a reminiscence of Livy, i. 8, *haec tempora quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus perventum est*—these times when we can endure neither our vices nor their cure.

bounds and limits of his Town and Countrey.' The homily condemns those who 'grind up the doles and markes which of ancient times were laid for the division of meeres and balkes in the fields,' and who ploughed up 'the ancient terries of the fields, that old men beforetime with great pain did tread out, whereby the Lord's records (which be the tenant's evidences) be perverted and translated sometime to the disheriting of the right owner'—causing riots and bloodshed. The people were warned that men who secure land or rights by legal tricks will not be blessed—'God did not suffer the third heir to enjoy his father's wrong possessions.' It would be well if this practical relationship between religious festivals and civic duties could be revived. Had it been kept alive there would be less need to-day for Footpaths and Commons Preservation Societies, kept alive not by the commonalty of every village but by a handful of earnest men and women.

Apart from a visit to Belgium, which I have recorded elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> I spent most of this month in Parliament, interspersed with occasional speeches in Hertfordshire or farther afield to Oxford or Lowestoft. I had the honour of being entertained to lunch by the Agha Khan, with the laurels of the turf freshly placed upon his genial brow. He spoke, fluently and with discretion, on British relations with Islamic States and with Islamic culture, which is tending to centre round Egypt, where it is in touch with and influenced to-day, as never before, by the ferment of the whole gamut of European ideas. He deplored, in private conversation, our comparative indifference to cultural questions: we were proud of English law, but our system was not for export: no Eastern nation would look to us for an example—they would turn to the French or German codes. We allowed archaeology to become a German or French preserve in some Islamic countries; we did nothing to encourage, by subsidy, the translation

<sup>1</sup> *Walks and Talks Abroad.*

into Arabic of books which inculcated the British outlook which he so greatly admired. We were going astray in Palestine. His Highness is a statesman with some practicable ideals before him which, I hope, he will live to see in fruition.

I spent long hours in this and succeeding months as one of the few laymen on a Committee set up by the British Medical Association to examine the present position of physical education from the point of view of the improvement of national health and physique. I was Chairman of a sub-Committee 'to collect information on systems of physical education in other countries.' We all did our work thoroughly, and the Report when issued doubtless had some influence upon the proposals embodied in legislation by Parliament two years later. Had it been printed in larger type and not that of the smallest footnote in this book, it might have been widely bought and read. The immense improvement in printing of recent years is something to be thankful for—and used to the fullest advantage. It costs so little more: better by far to print little and print that little well than to place 100,000 words in tiny type before the tired eyes of busy men.

The concluding paragraph of our Report read as follows:

The deliberations of the Committee have strengthened its profound conviction that there should in future be a far closer and more intimate relation between physical education and the science and art of medicine. At one time mainly concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of sickness, the medical profession has learned to recognise the importance of the prevention of disease as an essential part of a national health service. Now it is realised that the profession has more than a negative duty; it has also a part to play in the attainment of that state of positive good health and physical efficiency which is something infinitely better than mere absence of disease. Physical education, on the other hand, has

progressed from a narrow specialty of the gymnasium and games field in the hands of instructors and coaches with a limited training and apprehension, towards a national service, which aims at securing greater health, fitness, and happiness for the people as a whole, irrespective of age or sex. It should take its place among the great social services as a branch of public health, such as housing, sanitation, nutrition, etc., through which it is hoped to achieve that high standard of physical excellence combined with mental and moral discipline which other European countries are attempting in a different way. The Committee believes that progress towards this ideal will be hastened by encouraging that partnership between medical science and physical education which seems essential for rapid and sound development. Medical science can offer the much-needed research into the physiological basis of exercise, can exert the steadying influence of scientific control, can ensure that experimental methods are not empirical but are applied under informed direction. It can help to give physical education that status and position as part of the educational system from the university outwards, which it has never yet enjoyed. On the other side, physical education can inspire medical science with a new vision of health, a new understanding of what bodily fitness and a wise use of leisure means to the ordinary man and woman, and the doctors' responsibility in aiding them to achieve this. Sir Robert Morant was the first of our administrators to appreciate the close relationship of medical science and physical education when he placed the newly appointed inspectors of physical training at the Board of Education under the supervision of the Medical Department. The Committee is confident that the popular interest in physical education which is now being aroused will be used to support an enthusiastic determination to provide opportunities for exercise and physical education and recreation for all people in this country, and to make sure that a knowledge of these opportunities is widespread.

I was privileged to dine this month with a Territorial regiment: dinner was laid for two hundred in the Drill Hall on trestle tables. We were waited on by selected members of the rank and file, in military uniform, a



thoroughly democratic system, for the officers of the battalion are drawn from the ranks. On the walls was the War Memorial to two thousand men, mostly officers, nearly as many as on the London and North Eastern Railway memorial at York.

The Honorary Colonel spoke, simply and convincingly, but not so well as the Commanding Officer, whose appeal to those who would serve their country to wear the uniform of His Majesty, and to seek peace by showing no fear of war but only a determination to secure justice, was worthy of the occasion.

I reached home after midnight ; by ten o'clock next day I was back at Westminster helping as best I could a harassed and puzzled German manufacturer to set up, in my constituency, a factory which might, under the supervision of half a dozen Germans, employ 300 men. The Home Office and Ministry of Labour officials were helpful, the local authorities reasonable, but the German merchant's fears were not entirely allayed. It was hard to convince him that ' the discretion of the Minister ' would be executed in good faith and in a judicial manner. I recorded my vote three times during the interview, in each case against various clauses of a Bill which was killed that afternoon.

Then to tea with a leading Conservative, a man of broad vision and of ripe wisdom, followed by a series of calls on local residents and institutions. At 8 P.M. I was the guest of the strongest Conservative Club in the Division and spoke for an hour, answering questions for another hour. It was only one of a dozen engagements that month, including fêtes and baby-shows.

Foreigners, and many Londoners and dwellers in great cities, particularly the well-to-do, do not see this side of the political machine, the free play of exposition and discussion between Members and their constituents which enables the former to gauge public opinion and the latter to feel that they are playing their part in the

constitutional machine by expressing their views, with the utmost freedom, to the person whom they have chosen to represent them.

I reached King's Cross at midnight and an hour later was on my way to Newcastle-on-Tyne. Just as I left a young sailor jumped in, on week-end leave, to visit his parents near Doncaster. He had visited Rio and Buenos Aires with the Prince of Wales. He had served two years on the Mediterranean Station, and had visited Cairo and Jerusalem, Haifa and Alexandria, Barcelona and Naples, Athens and Algiers. Of each he had something interesting to say and his ideas were clear-cut. We exchanged cigarettes and reminiscences for an hour—and then to sleep. I awoke four hours later in a siding at Newcastle.

The contrast between Tyneside and Hertfordshire is so sharp that it always stimulates thought. The old moon was still high in the clear sky, a cool breeze blew from the sea. After finishing my business calls I decided to spend a few hours visiting some of the houses reconditioned by the Tyneside Housing Improvement Trust Limited. The Manager, a former High School Mistress, who combined the traditional virtues of that profession with the skilled enthusiasm of Octavia Hill, gave me a list of houses to visit, and my friend John Morgan acted as a guide. I saw where a row of back-to-back houses had just been demolished: no easy task, for the outer walls were of solid-cut stone. The street on either side was broad, straight, and well paved. A parallel row of similar houses looked, from the outside, quite unlike a slum. The brickwork was grimy, but in good condition, the woodwork recently painted, no pane of glass missing from the windows. The name of the manager of the Improvement Trust served as an introduction to the occupants, one of whom showed me over the first house I entered. The rooms were clean, the furniture good, the pictures pleasant to look on, the bedding poor, very poor. The

occupants, a man and his wife and four children, were paying 8s. 6d. for three rooms, with communal bath and a private lavatory—not an exorbitant price, as rates and taxes account for about 4s. 6d. They were ‘on relief’—the man, once a miner, long out of work, was not strong enough for heavy manual labour. He had come unscathed out of the war but, though no longer a healthy man, he had gone back to the pit. Two years later a tumour had developed; he claimed that it was due to war service, but his plea was disallowed, as he felt, unjustly. The grievance rankled. He was fit for light work only and wanted it badly. He had a son and two daughters in service and doing well, but they sent little home: ‘they have to think of their own future.’

My next visit was to a three-storey house, once the residence of a merchant, now occupied by six families, each with two large and one small room; offices being shared, as also the yard, though each flat had a separate coal-bin. The occupants took turns to wash the staircase and the front step, to air clothes in the yard and to use the bathroom. Each room was lit by gas, and had a gas-cooker, but not suitable for baking, which was bad, for most housewives in the North regard this as part of their duties. Every other house had a good coal-burning kitchen range which served to warm the whole flat. The rent was about the same as before, though the Trust was only just paying its way, but the rooms were larger and the fittings much better. All the occupants had been removed hither from condemned areas. They were paying no more in rent and had rather better quarters and were therefore content, but they wished that sunshine could sometimes penetrate the rooms—that, however, was impossible. All the heads of families in this house were out of work: all the men were still in the forties: all were in the house when I called. One set of rooms was held by a widow and three young children: her husband, a collier, had died last winter and she had had to leave

the house provided by the company and find another home, no easy task for a weary mother 'with no rent-book to show'—*i.e.* with no evidence that she was a good tenant.

Elsewhere I saw a new block of flats being built on modern lines with light, sound-proof partitions of pumice blocks on the upper floor. *Eppur si muove*. But at the present rate of progress half a century will elapse before the population who can find a living there will be properly housed.

T. E. Lawrence died this month in a road accident: his best epitaph is perhaps from Pliny's letter to Tacitus (xvi. 6):

*Equidem beatos puto quibus deorum munere datum est aut facere scribenda aut scribere legenda; beatissimos vero quibus utrumque.*

Happy those who can do things worth recording, or write things worth reading: most happy those to whom it is given to do both.

His reputation will rest on literature rather than on statesmanship. I saw, from the other side of Arabia, much of his work and admired much, but not all, that I saw. Twice we were brought into acute controversies in a clash of our respective loyalties: once when Sir Percy Cox and I both begged leave to decline the attempt, ordered by H.M. Government at the instance of Lord Kitchener, to bribe the Turks to let the garrison of Kut-al-Amara go free, and again when Lawrence was over-zealous in desiring to extend the Arab Empire of his dreams to include Iraq, Syria, Palestine as well as the Hejaz. I was then in the service and perforce dumb: he had some very hard things to say of me in the columns of the *Daily Herald* and some very unjust things to say of the officers who served under me, but they broke no bones or hearts.

A few months later Mr. Churchill, with his customary talent for securing the right kind of publicity for his policy, induced 'T. E. Shaw' to immure himself for a year in Downing Street as an adviser on Arab policy. He was not happy looking at the East from a secluded corner. He never revisited Arabia or Syria, and he gladly threw the mantle of office from his shoulders to assume, not long after, though much over age, the habit of the Royal Air Force. Now he has become a legend; very profitable to publishers and film producers. His books are published in cheap unexpurgated editions, but there will be no French translation, judging from the very hostile tone of obituaries in the French press. A sad end for a fine spirit—'*omnium consensu capacissimus imperii, nisi imperasset,*' as Tacitus said of Agricola.

On the few occasions I met him I thought he quite failed to realise that the Arab of the desert, the raider, the nomad, the gentleman on a camel, was doomed to slow eclipse. The motor car has done much to kill the demand for camels for commercial purposes, as also to a great extent for mules and even for the finest horses. The nomadic life was dictated by the need of constant movement to fresh pastures for camels; sheep will remain and may increase, but they cannot wander so far afield, for they must be watered daily, and need grass, not camel thorn. Great areas of desert which are now occupied for a few weeks or months in every year will be untenanted for decades, perhaps for centuries. The deep wells cut thousands of years ago through solid rock will be filled with drifting sand and their very names will be lost, unless an organised Government maintains them and, perhaps, makes new ones which, equipped with suitable pumps, could irrigate large areas and sustain a considerable population. The radio, the internal combustion engine and the aeroplane will revolutionise Arabia as they have changed the tempo of Europe, and in as short a time. Ibn Sa'ud, the man T. E. Lawrence despised, 'has become

the headstone of the corner ' ; the dynasty Lawrence backed, that of Husain of Mecca, is discredited in Arabia, the Arabs he invested with glamour and romance figure in our daily Press as fanatics or terrorists. I can understand and sympathise with his refusal ever again to return to the country or people whose cause he espoused.

Another event of the month of June was the earthquake which at 3 A.M. on May 31 blotted out Quetta, the Aldershot of India, by one of the most disastrous shocks of modern times, at a loss of life which exceeded thirty thousand persons, for the convulsion extended over a length of 70 miles. It was the second such visitation in eighteen months, for an earthquake of no less severity in January 1934 had rendered half a million persons homeless in Northern Bihar and in Nepal and had caused great loss of life. In each case great numbers of persons were seriously injured—maimed for life—surviving only to live as beggars or dependent on a few surviving relatives. £750,000 was raised by a Mansion House Fund for the Bihar earthquake, but little was done in this way for the Quetta disaster.

I have had some small experience of such cataclysms. I was riding up the hill to Kasauli, in India, on April 4, 1905, when, at 6 A.M., an earthquake occurred which cost 20,000 lives in the Kangra valley, a hundred miles away. I was not aware of the shock myself, though the horse doubtless staggered and stumbled. I passed the church, and saw the clock stopped and the pinnacles dislodged: there must, I thought, have been a gale. Some trees had fallen across the road—clearly the gale had been severe. At last I passed some houses, and saw the occupants standing about out of doors in unaccustomed garb: I still did not learn what had happened until I reached the Club. A few hours later the news reached us: that afternoon my regiment, the 32nd Sikh Pioneers, was ordered for relief work to the Kangra valley, where

we spent four months burying or burning the dead, re-opening the roads and irrigation channels and demolishing dangerous buildings.

The catastrophe prompted the reflexion that a fresh attempt should be made within the British Empire to begin with, to create a fund, administered by the King in Council, to assist in the rehabilitation of areas devastated by these 'acts of God' which fall almost annually upon His Majesty's subjects, wrecking lives, upsetting budgets and destroying hope. Against such events few individuals, and no Governments, can insure. Such a central fund might do much to give practical shape to the unity that is within our hearts. It would transcend boundaries of nationality, race and colour; it might be the precursor in the distant future of a world-wide fund on similar lines. It is right that we should take the initiative, for we alone, in these islands, are almost completely immune—so safe that we omitted 'earthquakes' from the deprecation in our Litany, which ran, according to the Roman Use :

From lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence and famine,  
*from the scourge of earthquake*, from battle, murder and from unforeseen (*improvisa* = unprepared) death,

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

At the next revision we should do well to restore the words in italics, to remind us of the most terrible experiences that can befall the many communities which in times of distress look to us for succour.

Looking through the pre-war correspondence of my predecessor in the Editorial Chair of *The Nineteenth Century and After* twenty-five years ago, I was struck at the similarity of the subjects which then occupied the public mind. Unemployment, Christian Reunion, the Emancipation of Russian Jews, Anglo-German relations, the need and danger of tariffs, the shortage of officers and men for our Regular Army—upon such subjects articles were

offered from weighty pens several times a year. A world-parliament to make universal laws for the good of all—the *ne plus ultra* of the totalitarian State—and, as a necessary corollary, a universal Police Force to suppress lawless actions—was widely canvassed as an infallible prelude to unlimited prosperity and perfect security, but, as one writer claimed, ‘better defence must precede limitation of armaments.’ Church Reunion, the place of our older universities in a national system of education, the importance, or otherwise, of science as a part of education, the problems of Ireland, of unemployment, of unequal justice consequent upon excessive costs which deter the poor litigant, the decay of poetry, the state of our marriage laws—these and other subjects have never ceased to be topical, and what was written then might with a few alterations if reprinted to-day be read with equal interest—and with equally little prospect of action.

Talking on these lines one evening at a City Dinner, my neighbour, a Dominion statesman of repute, countered me with the observation :

‘One should not worry about things that don’t matter and things that it is beyond our power to change.’

‘But everything “matters” to somebody,’ I replied, ‘and is there anything that it is beyond human power to change?’

‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘everything matters to somebody. The sort of thing I had in my mind was the purely personal tribulations that get on some people’s nerves. As for the other sort, the whole basis of dictatorship, benevolent or otherwise, is that by organisation humanity can accomplish anything. I don’t believe it.’

He was a fine speaker and a wise man. I realised that he had delineated in a few words the gulf which separates two types of mind, the reformist and the quietist, and I belong, inseparably, by my paternal and maternal ancestry, to the former.



## CHAPTER IV

JULY–AUGUST 1935

Because half a dozen grasshoppers make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field—that of course they are many in number—or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre hopping though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.

EDMUND BURKE.

ONE evening this month I was the guest of Mr. A. P. Herbert, M.P., on his launch, which took us from Lambeth to the Tower and back. Packets ply regularly between Westminster Bridge and Greenwich; they are fully licensed, and are the coolest places in London on a fine day in summer. Yet I saw them leaving half empty. Not one in a thousand Londoners, I suppose, has been on these reaches in the Thames. I too, to my shame, had never made the trip.

A new world stood revealed, uglier, between Blackfriars and the Tower, than any reach on any tidal river I know, as shabby as the worst slums of Glasgow, the shores as evil-smelling as the sea-front of any Oriental village. There was no sign of planning for anything but wharves, and little indication of forethought even in that limited range of activity. Some wharves are a century old: some are comparatively seldom used. It certainly looks as if the real work of the Port could with advantage be concentrated on half the frontage, leaving the rest for the two or three millions who live within a mile of the river

which they seldom see and cannot or may not use for health or pleasure. The tide was very strong, and we tied up for a time to a tug anchored in the fairway and made the master and chief engineer welcome. They talked of bridges; from their point of view, Charing Cross Bridge, with its six stark pillars set parallel with the flow of the stream, was the safest to navigate, for the stream was not broken and pent by bulky piers as at Waterloo Bridge, to whose impending fate they were indifferent. It was merely to them a hindrance to navigation and a danger to their craft.

The talk turned to the romance of the river, embodied, to them, in the rescues of the living and the recovery of the dead—one naked but for a wedding ring and a boot; another drowned below the Tower and found six months later near Westminster, having spent the time in between, with a vast quantity of polluting material, moving up and down the filthy stream. They were cheerful folk, full of goodwill towards men in general but of resentment against foreign-owned barges, grossly undermanned according to our laws, who plied freely between British ports, undercutting wages and endangering employment. Who could compete with a motor-barge manned by a crew consisting of the captain, his wife, and four sons, of whom three were under sixteen? The lorry-owners had a monopoly of the road-traffic, the companies of the railways, the open sea should remain free to all, but the foreign share of our coasting trade should be limited.

We steamed slowly back to Westminster against a strong ebb-tide. Some months later I visited Greenwich and went by river to Barking Outfall, where the sewage of the greatest part of London is discharged, a foul-smelling thick stream rivalling many English rivers in size. Some of it is carried back by the tide to the Tower and beyond: all the foulness of the Port is likewise wafted up river, particularly in summer when the Thames is low.

The Port of London Authority has widened and deepened the river in the last ten years, so that the highest tides are somewhat higher and the lowest somewhat lower than of old. Hence flooding of basements with loss of life some years ago and the need for high walls on either side. The rate of flow of the ebb-tide is greater than it was: it is dangerous, almost unusable, by rowing boats or pleasure craft. The King and Queen could not safely make their progress to-day in a Royal Barge manned by rowers, however expert. Thus it has come about that the Empire's greatest port, and the world's greatest city, are served by a river which we symbolise by Father Thames, represented for the last century, but no earlier, as a garbage-ridden scarecrow.

The remedy, urged by Lord Desborough, the veteran Chairman of the Thames Conservancy Board, Lord Dudley and others, in the House of Lords,<sup>1</sup> with the expert support of engineers, including Sir Murdoch Macdonald, famous for his work on another famous river, the Nile, is a barrage at Greenwich, with locks for small and large craft, which would maintain a water level to be maintained a little below high-water mark in the Port of London, thus enabling cargo to be loaded and discharged at any time of the day or night and ships and barges to move, unimpeded by heavy currents, in either direction at any time. Such a barrage could be built for six millions or so. Sewage would for ever be excluded from the stream above Barking: the youth of London could take pleasure in the best of exercises—rowing, for which the Lea only is now available, and that for but a few miles. The Thames at Westminster would be as clean as at Teddington; the sewage-laden mud banks would be covered: there might even be a chance for anglers on the Embankment! An inquiry is in progress: it is, of course, being opposed, like every other reform, by the established interests. It deserves as much support from

<sup>1</sup> *H.L. Debates*, May 26, 1937.

the public as it will receive criticism from those who have accustomed themselves to things as they are.

There is one precedent for such a barrage—on a tidal river serving a great port—the Charles River at Boston, and it is favourable, for it is both useful and beautiful, and the builders of the barrage had to face exactly the same type of opposition as that voiced by Lord Desborough's opponents.

I spent one morning this month, not for the first time, visiting two Ministry of Labour training centres, both in the London area. These places—there are a dozen scattered over England—have been in existence for about ten years: the youths from 18 to 25 years of age who attend them are drawn only from areas where unemployment is heaviest. They are taught, over a period of six months, one of a dozen different trades in which there is, or seems likely to be, a shortage of skilled labour. Their tutors are all skilled tradesmen, with long experience as foremen and an aptitude for giving practical teaching—a gift which is not always developed in early life, and is probably commoner in the workshop than in the school. These young men get lodging allowance and live as part of the local community instead of being encouraged to herd together. One meal at midday is served at the centre; the rest they must get for themselves. The place is full of machinery, such as men will have to use on the jobs to which they will go: the system is that of a good factory, and a boy who has been through a centre will find the routine of a large firm easier to understand.

Every year some seven thousand men pass out of these centres qualified to earn a living and to learn more. They go straight to jobs at rates of pay which will not undercut current standards; 30 per cent. are in the same firm and 70 per cent. in the same trade a year later. There is nothing better in England: it should be the beginnings of a system of State apprenticeship—a logical extension of organised practical instruction from fourteen

upwards. Men are taught more here in six months than most apprentices in the ordinary way can pick up in two years. They start, most of them, at scratch, and many are earning 1s. 4d. an hour, few less than 1s. 1d. an hour, within six months of entering an industry which could usually take many more of them, for there is, in many places, a real dearth of skilled men, and these youths are the material of which, within a year or two, highly skilled craftsmen can be made. They do not, in practice, replace more highly skilled men.

After a long evening spent in re-reading it, and in writing these lines, I left London by a crowded night train for Newcastle, with *Waiting for Nothing*, by Tom Kromer,<sup>1</sup> in my pocket. It tells what happens in the U.S.A. to unemployed men and women. It is a terrible tale, because every word rings true, revolting in its revelation of cruelty suffered at the hands of authority, and each other, by men and women of our race and flesh and blood in a country which has not had the grace or power to change its government to meet new conditions. I compared it with *Means Test Man* and *The Submerged Tenth*, books which describe men in like straits in this country. In England few officials are unfriendly; the police never brutal. Penniless men and women have rights, and a recognised claim, however small; they are somebody's responsibility. I do not envy the man who can read these books without gaining fresh strength and making a new resolve to devote himself to the hard task of fashioning a better world.

I reached Newcastle at dawn, and before six o'clock crossed the river to Gateshead. I walked through Redheugh and Ravensworth and Lower Tearn, where unemployment was still heavy. Then through Felling, Hebburn and Jarrow, all looking a bit better than last year; the activities of the Tyneside Council of Social Service

<sup>1</sup> With an introduction by Theodore Dreiser. (Constable.)

have had visible results. Employment was better: the shipyards were busier, and the men and women going to work thronged the streets as they never did a year ago. But the unemployment figure is still high, and will so remain, as long as people cling to an area from which the abnormal employment of war and post-war years has gone, never to return. The new housing estates which are springing up on all sides are an encouraging sign of local enterprise and confidence in the future, and are bound, provided the rates and rents payable are not too high, to have a good effect on public health.

Then to the market-square in Blyth to watch and listen, with 2000 others, to the Colliery Brass Bands contest. The uniforms were as gay as the banners. Every bandsman must be employed at a pit—a class distinction that is not very popular, nor even reasonable, in these days of changing industrial conditions. At half-past two the bands marched in procession to the meeting-place on the foreshore to hear speeches from two platforms. On one stood James Maxton, M.A., M.P.; the other was occupied by Ernest Shinwell, once a Minister of Mines; the ubiquitous Herbert Morrison, making the first of three speeches in two days in this area; and Ebby Edwards, a veteran Northumberland miner and miners' official. His speech alone was suited to his audience and the occasion. He spoke of the toll of the traffic on roads below ground, of the death of boys and youths under twenty-one—hinting that careless and even callous owners existed and had some responsibility for the casualty list. As I heard him, Kipling's *Queen's Men* came back to me:

Scarce had they lifted up  
Life's full and fiery cup,  
Than they had set it down untouched before them.  
Before their day arose  
They beckoned it to close—  
Close in destruction and confusion o'er them.

But the figures, over forty years, show an immense improvement—greater, perhaps, than in any other industry.

He demanded nationalisation of the mines, and higher wages, but told his audience that the former demand was not near at hand, and the latter not easily accomplished till the demand improved. It was a closely argued, well-reasoned speech, addressed to reasonable men, and when on the following Monday I appeared in the Town Hall, as advertised, 'to answer the speeches of the miners' leaders,' I tried to pitch my speech in the same key. I was given a patient hearing and cross-examined, rather than heckled, by men who, I was told beforehand, would shout me down if they disagreed with me.

I had been down a local pit that morning with the sitting Member rather with the object of 'tuning myself in' than of seeing anything fresh, for I have seen many pits, and the one I saw, though well managed, was not one of the most modern. The machine conveyors were noisily impressive, but I am not surprised that boys dislike them; the wooden pit-props had given way to the steel props and beams, on which I gashed my forehead badly enough to provide me with a good opening, viz. that my morning's visit had taught me that 'there is no room for a fool in a pit.'

The visit had an interesting sequel. A young miner, whom I had noticed listening critically and carefully, accosted me outside the hall when his fellows had dispersed. He asked me where I got my figures from: I gave him the Blue Books on which I relied. He told me he was an ex-guardsman, married, with two children. We entered into correspondence later: his letters, not always well spelt, and ill-written, for few can write well whose muscles are daily in use on hard labour, were well phrased and clear. One day he told me that his wife was keen on coming south, where she belonged: could I find him work? I put him in touch with a firm which wanted

men able to handle conveyors and fit for heavy work. I met him by appointment at the railway station and took him to see the Manager, his talk with whom was almost defiant and not that of a suppliant.

‘ You look strong enough.’

‘ I am that.’

‘ I expect a fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage.’

‘ I’d sooner be on piece-work, thanks.’

‘ It’s not always easy to arrange with all this machinery about.’

‘ I’ll show you how.’

‘ When will you start ? ’

‘ I’ll start to-morrow and see how I like the job.’

‘ But where are your working clothes ? ’

‘ At the station.’

‘ Do you want lodging ? ’

‘ I’ll ask the police.’

‘ Do you want an advance ? ’

‘ I do not.’

‘ I hope you’re grateful to our Member for taking an interest in you.’

He glanced at me and looked at his boots, but was silent.

We shook hands and left the office. When we had walked a hundred yards or so up the street he turned to me :

‘ He was a good man, but he should not have said that last. It’s he that will be glad of me : I’ll be a better man than most he’s got. I do not need to be told to say thank you : you don’t want it any more than an officer, and I’ll be beholden to no man.’

He was as good as his word : three months later he had found a cottage and his family came down with the furniture by a private arrangement made by him with a friendly lorry-owner. Two years later he was still in the same employ.



I asked the verger of a cathedral that shall be nameless if he remembered a former Dean—a friend of my father. ‘Yes, indeed,’ he replied. ‘In those days the Word of God was preached, and there was a policeman to see that the worshippers formed a queue to come in. Now Social Credit and the like is preached from the pulpit—there’s no queue and no policeman.’

The more I consider the relation which should exist between Christian principles and social legislation generally the less I feel able to find for legislators in the former any guidance that I cannot find in other philosophies. The Archbishops would have us equate Christianity with the League of Nations, a body which knows nothing of Christianity and is (or was) predominantly managed by non-Christians or professed atheists.

Christians do not agree about many matters which seem to involve principles. The indissolubility of marriage; the propriety of birth control; the duty of an able-bodied man to serve in *justum bellum*—whatever that may involve; the lawfulness of cremation; the number and nature of the Sacraments; the relative importance of belief and of conduct—upon all these and many other matters of principle we are profoundly divided.

I myself, a member of the Modern Churchman’s Union, a life-long student of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, my feet set firmly *super vias antiquas*, ‘upon the old ways,’ am deeply attached to the Forms and Ceremonies laid down in the Prayer Book of 1662, and when, in former days, I regularly took evening service at a chapel of ease in a hamlet, I found my audience was ready and anxious to hear both expounded, however imperfectly, by one who was steeped in them. These books are to me *lucerna pedibus*, a lantern to my feet, and a light to my path as an individual. But, as a legislator, I feel with Seneca *non quid sed quemadmodum facias hoc interest*. It is not what you do that matters, but what is your aim

and intention. Mr. Baldwin put one point of view well when he said :

‘ All men are not equal and never will be, *but all are worth while.*’

The phrase is vague but the principle clear, and it is worth following.

A young constituent came, unexpected and unannounced, to see me at the House of Commons just before the Recess with letters of introduction from a rural district councillor and the vicar of his parish. Twenty-four years of age, five years on the same farm, strong to labour, big-boned, well set-up, with a quick step and a sharp eye. Unmarried and ‘ no encumbrances.’ He had been in trouble, but not with the police, in circumstances which Lord Herbert in his autobiography, speaking of himself, described as *honestu factu, sed turpia dictu*. He had an uncle in America who wanted him to go out there and start again. He could pay his own fare and leave a bit over ; he could even buy a return ticket in case he could not settle there. He was willing to be ‘ nationalised,’ like some of his forbears who had gone to America in the latter half of the last century.

Could he get a visa ? It seemed clear, from the forms sent him from the American Consulate-General, that able-bodied young men without capital, accustomed to work with their hands and to handle animals, were not wanted. ‘ Visas,’ read the printed circular, ‘ are invariably refused in cases of this kind.’ The United States, in common with most other countries, apparently welcomes only those who promise to consume but not to create wealth.

I suggested Australia. He shook his head firmly. He had heard of the Victoria settlers, and a man who had come back thence to his village had said that all emigration was stopped at present. To Canada he was better disposed, but he had no friends or relations there, and it

was hard for a stranger to find his way in life. Emigration has so slowed down that the personal ties of blood and friendship between men and women on either side of the Atlantic are growing thinner; I fancy that a Post Office census would reveal a great drop in personal correspondence between Canadian and British land-workers. More men are still returning from Canada than are going thither from the United Kingdom.

The boy was resentful at the existence of these obstacles: he had heard a lot about the Empire, and about Anglo-American co-operation and the English-speaking races. 'It is all bunk,' he exclaimed indignantly. 'It is time we looked after ourselves.' I was inclined to agree with him, for the time being, and told him how to set about finding a steady job elsewhere in England on the land. I fancy he will have no difficulty in suiting himself, but it is sad to have to repress adventurous spirits. He was of the marrying sort, and, as Bacon said, '*Natura enim nisi parendo non vincitur.*' The right to become a parent is one which cannot be denied without danger to national survival. We are in danger of forgetting that it is equal if not superior to the right to live.

I had half an hour to wait one evening at a small railway station distant nearly a mile from the nearest hamlet. The old railway porter, who combined in his own efficient hands all executive and administrative functions, was working on his allotment close by. He was tired and ready for a chat. From the weather we turned to crops, and especially to allotments. His view was that of Proverbs xiii. 23, which, heavily scored in the margin of my Great Bible of 1538 by some sixteenth-century preacher, reads:

There is plenteousnesse of fode in ye feldes of ye poore : but the felde not well ordered, is without frute.

He showed his bit of ground and compared it proudly

with that of his neighbour. He grew nigh all he and his family could eat, and generally had some to give away to visiting friends and relations. 'It's wonderful how pleased folks are with a few bits of things out of a man's garden.' But he knew how to make things grow, and took trouble. Even in his village—and he allowed it was a good village—some men and women were so shiftless that, whatever wages they drew, they would be on the parish within a month if illness came their way. Some of the younger men wanted the dole—they took little interest even in the best and most varied jobs—content to draw wages with no ambition to make the most of life. Marriage bucked them up a bit, and when children came along they often sobered down, but he deplored the low standard of comfort to which they aspired. A cinema once a week and a motor cycle were a poor exchange for a well-kept house and garden, with room to grow all the fruit and vegetables, chickens and eggs that a family could need. The squire had given enough land for everyone to have a big allotment, and it was good land. He was sixty-three and would soon be retiring: he would 'thole out' on his pension. Though he and his wife had raised six children, of whom four were alive and married, he would not depend on them.

The life he led kept him healthy: he did not worry. He knew men—all in the local railway service—who had 'nerves' so badly that they were unfit for work. All were in regular employment, and not on what a man would call hard work; they just went 'queer'—absent-minded at one moment, frightened of themselves the next. The doctor could not explain it, but one thing was worth noting: they none of them did anything in a garden; they none of them had any hobby; none of them were companionable—they did not even take a glass of beer now and then.

His cure for the nation's ill was work: most people in the country who want to work could do so, even if there

is no employment. For young men a year's military service would be the ideal thing to keep them off the labour market and give them flesh and bone and tone by exercise and good food. He was an old soldier—twelve years in the Army: his son had followed him and done him credit. 'It's no good,' he concluded, 'trying to get more out of the world than you put into it: the more you do for folk, the less they do for themselves.' The train came in and I parted from the fine old philosopher; there are many like him, but we need more.

On my way home I met a boy collecting a particular fungus which grows on elm-trees—none other, he said, suited his purpose, which was to use it to smoke out wasps. It burned like tinder when dry and a burning lump placed at the entrance dispersed the strongest colony, and in the middle of the fumes the nest, a foot or so underground, could be dug out with safety and the 'brood' (or eggs) secured for use as bait, for which purpose it had no rival. A fruit-farmer nearby gave him sixpence for every wasp nest he destroyed, so he was paid for his pleasure.

One Sunday this month I met, not by chance, some of the drivers and conductors in the service of the London Passenger Transport Board who had withheld their labour for forty-eight hours at the week-end, to the extreme inconvenience of the public in some of the Home Counties, including Hertfordshire. The strike was unauthorised by the men's union, and was largely spontaneous, though not unpremeditated, for a small group of men had been quietly preparing the ground. Hours, time-schedules and rates of pay were the ostensible, but not the only, grounds.

They were admittedly in all these respects better off under the L.P.T.B. than before, and they enjoyed greater security of tenure. What seemed to irk them most

was the deliberate policy of mechanising humanity pursued by the Board. Under private ownership they had regular runs on which they were known to passengers, and could bring business to the owner by helping to develop parcels delivery business and the like: they were individually known and could get a day off, or even a week off, on full pay for family reasons, if the boss was in a good mood and business was not too brisk. If they had a 'grouse' they were able to make it to the man who could decide things. There was less formality and more personality in the day's work, and less liability to be transferred, at great discomfort and cost, to another centre, with the loss of friends that was entailed.

'I once asked the old man for a week off, as my wife was going to have a baby,' said one. "'She must have it next week," said he, "we're too busy this week to bother about babies."' On the very last day of the week, sure enough, I was wanted at home by the doctor, as I expected, and I let him know. "All right," he said, "I'll run the old bus myself;" and he did, and didn't count those three days as days off and told the clerk to bring my pay to the house. He was a hard old nut, but a man to work for, and he made money on the run, which is more than we are doing now, and what he made he put back into the business.'

Receipts were down, they said, though population was going up. Fewer services, higher fares, fewer and larger omnibuses, less employment: no one pleased; more people to be seen on bicycles. A man dismissed by the L.P.T.B. was barred from similar employment anywhere within fifty miles of London; he had no chance of getting back. The machine was so big that it was often cruelly unjust. If this was rationalisation, they had no use for it.

A week later—indeed, after I had recorded the foregoing note—I received a letter signed by the leading residents of a rather remote part of Hertfordshire,

including the Archbishop of Westminster (not a man who puts his name lightly to a document), protesting against the discontinuance at a few days' notice of certain services by the L.P.T.B. The same post brought the Board's explanatory memorandum. The new 'co-ordinated program' had been under consideration for many months: twenty-two councils had been 'consulted'; a local transport committee was to be set up, apparently as a lightning-conductor or shock-absorber for the benefit of the Board. Fares were being standardised: this meant increases in some, decreases in other cases. Cheap workmen's tickets were being stopped: the new arrangement (less advantageous to workmen) would be universal, whereas the companies superseded by the L.P.T.B. did not give cheap tickets on all lines. New arrangements would be made for school-children, though not, I was told elsewhere, so convenient or so cheap as the old and informal arrangements of the former private companies. The new dispositions were the best possible 'having regard to the financial obligations of the Board,' which has all the privileges and immunities of 'public authority.' The cream is theirs. They leave to private enterprise only twice skimmed milk.

Personal investigation indicated that the changes involved, on balance, an appreciable increase of fares, which was not, after all, a surprise, for that is the primary justification for a monopoly—and a decrease, compared with pre-monopoly days, of mileage run; for services that paid small men, who ran them when there was a demand and stopped when there was none, do not pay these august bodies. Their predecessors were not philanthropists, but men anxious to make a living by serving their neighbours—an attitude of mind apparently uncongenial to the Traffic Commissioners. They took the old omnibus out twice in the morning to catch early trains, and again in the evenings: for the rest of the time

they sometimes worked with their hands in smithy or garage.

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey  
Where Boards co-ordinate and men decay.

Thus Goldsmith would have written to-day of 'The Deserted Village.' Country life has, in fact, suffered severely from the centralisation of traffic authority, the ruthless elimination of small men by Act of Parliament in favour of the strong, silent sort who manage 'combines,' who have easy access to authority and the City, and can pull the strings that make the marionettes dance so prettily that Parliament, Press, and prelates alike applaud, so long as dividends are safe—and even longer.



CHAPTER V  
SEPTEMBER 1935  
Ten Days in Kerry

A man willing to work, and unable to find work, is perhaps the saddest sight that Fortune's inequality exhibits under the sun.

CARLYLE.

To have passed fifty years and to have fought alongside of many and opposed a few Irishmen and yet never to have visited Ireland is proof of a lack of enterprise, to which I had to plead guilty until a first visit, in September, spent in a remote village on the western shores showed me what I had missed *in tenebris in partibus orientalium*.

I reached Dublin on a Sunday morning and took an excursion train to Killarney. *The Irish Independent* that morning carried a great headline declaring that Irish doctors were wanted to volunteer for service in Abyssinia. 'I'd sooner see them go to Belfast and have a whack at the English,' said a fellow passenger to an assenting friend. We fell to talking of current events. One man quoted to me with approval a recent saying :

Bring religion into politics but keep politics out of religion—when the Irish understand what that means and act on it there will be peace and unity in Ireland.

Politics, alas, are a live issue just now. They enter, inevitably, into every conversation before long. The Belfast riots just before my visit had made old wounds throb and bleed again. The Irish cattle-tax, a reprisal for

the repudiation of land annuity payments, had brought distress to the farmers, small and large. The relative merits of Cosgrave's and de Valera's Governments were still warmly debated. There are many who do not believe in the latter, but support it: yet all are agreed that 'the English' have done no good to themselves, or the Empire, or to Ireland by our handling of current issues. In fact, as a Persian proverb puts it, 'When a wise man quarrels with a fool, the greater blame is on the wise man.' But it is not a casual English visitor's business to-day to criticise what he sees in Ireland, but to try to understand.

*With Horace Plunkett in Ireland*, by R. A. Anderson, was sent to me by post the day after I arrived, and helped me to do so, though I paid 3s. 10d. in customs duty—a heavy handicap on intellectual links between Ireland and the world. Mr. Anderson tells the story of forty-five years' work with Horace Plunkett and of his ideas of agricultural co-operation—a pedestrian epic enlivened by scores of flashes of genius and pen portraits of men in all walks of life.

The audience was sharply divided—the 'Papists' on one side, 'Presbyterians' on the other. The air had to be cleared. Father Finlay began quietly . . . 'it seemed strange that men who desired a creamery should concern themselves about a quarrel, more than two centuries ago, between a Dutchman and a Scotsman. Can we not leave that old quarrel to be settled between them, that is to say, if too great a gulf do not now divide them?'

The plea, with its gentle reference to Lazarus and Dives, was successful. Would that it could be made afresh and with equal effect in a wider sphere.

I went round the Lakes at Killarney in an outside car driven by a young Irishman with a fine high-skipping mare between the shafts. No cars are allowed in the road, most of which passes through what once was a private

domain but is now a National Park. The owner, an American, gave it to the Free State: it had cost him £14,000 a year in taxes and £9000 a year to keep up. He retained the right to reside, when he visited Ireland, in the mansion which he gave with the grounds. This and much else was told me by the driver, who knew the history of the estate for three hundred years.

I saw no deer and no birds. 'I am surprised to see no gulls about,' said I. 'They'll be at the races, most of them, with the boys,' he replied. I did not attempt to explain myself. His thoughts were clearly elsewhere. After a time we caught up the Dublin tourists in a score of horse-drawn vehicles. My driver began to speak of the glory of the tourist traffic—the making of Killarney: a pity the season was no longer. The English were coming back—paying less attention to 'the boys' (by which I gather he referred to the supporters of political parties) than to the scenery. Americans were fewer in number and not so free with their cash as of old. On the walls in villages and in Killarney itself I saw stencilled notices: 'Boycott English goods' (old), 'Up the Republic,' 'Join the I.R.A.' and 'To Hell with the New Force,' 'Death to Traitors,' 'Cut the Connection with England and Wear an Easter Lily.' But everyone was, as in new Germany, polite and friendly. I heard children talking Erse to each other: 'They'll be practising for scholars,' said the driver.

Then to Tralee by another crowded train full of local trippers, of all ages. My fellow passengers were of the exuberant sort I had met in North Wales, with the English popular songs on their lips, learned on the wireless and gramophone, but so clearly different in race that I felt that they should be singing in Erse, not English.

Juvenal remarks somewhere that the penniless traveller will sing within earshot of a robber: robbers have deserted our high-roads and content themselves with organising bazaars or assisting to plan the life and

leisure of others, whether on elected bodies or otherwise, but the significant conjunction of 'captabit' and 'viator' remains.

In Ireland, the rhythm of the wheels of the train seems to predispose travellers to song when on holiday. They kept time for each other by the simple method of the noisy foot-beat.

I visited the local cinema in Tralee: it was less well attended that night than the church, to which hundreds of men and women, young and old, resorted between 7 and 10 P.M., as in Spanish-American countries, to spend ten minutes or so on their knees. On the outskirts a housing scheme had just been completed; some 200 sorry cabins in the centre of the town had been demolished and the inhabitants moved to their new quarters. The town looked poor: few passers-by looked 'well-to-do' in the matter of dress or amusements. The liquor shops were dark and comfortless, the streets ill-paved. Only half a score of motor cars passed down the main street. Many shops had put up their shutters, not to re-open. The general appearance was that of a street in a town in the most distressed area of England. The cost of food is 20 per cent. higher than in England, but not the cost of living, for the scale of expenditure on amusements, new clothes and fripperies is far lower. One-price shops and chain stores do not flourish. Yet the young men and women looked cheerful and healthy and, taken as a whole, were strikingly good looking.

Visitors are apt to regard 'the natives' as rooted to the spot where they live at the moment. There are in every corner of the Free State, as of the United Kingdom, thousands who have lived abroad and know their own worth in open competition with the world. Very many have come back with a free ticket from the U.S.A. or have been 'deported'—shameful expression—from Canada or Australia. They are the unlucky ones—there are as many men who would willingly take their chance

if the ports of the Dominions and the U.S.A. were open to them.

As it is, what is left of the United Kingdom is the only place to which they can go freely—and they seldom fail to find work.

At 6 A.M. on Monday morning I was awakened by the noise of hundreds of carts passing under my window, each holding three or four pigs destined for the two local bacon factories, and by occasional squealing droves driven by handsome bare-footed boys and girls. I left by car soon after for Castlegregory, 12 miles westward, at the base of the spit which divides the Bays of Brandon and Tralee, known as the Magharees or Maharees. Not a fishing boat was in sight. I asked the reason. 'The mackerel went away eight years back—no one knows why—no one fishes for anything but lobsters now. Time was, when food and boots were no object in Brandon—nor drink either too—those were good days—but they're gone now and the fisher folk have gone too.' 'Food and boots no object'—a phrase full of meaning.

Castlegregory is as good a place as I have ever seen—two great beaches for use according to the weather; a freshwater lough with free fishing—lofty sandhills on the Magharees—the home of many rabbits, an ideal site for a fine golf links—and, towering above the bays, a series of peaks of 2700 feet with many loughs and tarns in their skirts. The view on every side from the summit of Stradbally mountain or Beanoskee can have few equals throughout what was once the United Kingdom. Every available acre within sight in the plains below is cultivated, mostly in small fields, far smaller than in England, and well fenced. This part of Kerry is a land of smallholders: they make a living by growing barley and oats and beet and potatoes in patches of four or five acres, with a fair head of cattle, but it must be a hard life, though they are only paying half their annuities. In twenty years' time or so they will be freeholders, but it is a long time to wait.

I saw a creamery van at work in one village : it comes three times a week at stated hours, strips the milk of its cream, returning the skim milk to the owners, who feed it to their pigs. The cream is taken to the factory and turned into butter or cheese. There is no ' co-operation ' here ; the van was a private venture, and was meeting a public need.

One evening a strolling musician arrived by bicycle to enliven the village street with his accordion. He spoke Irish as well as English and told me he had roamed thus all over Ireland. He claimed, proudly, that he was ' pure Irish ' and looked it : he had no praise for the ' quare Government we have these days '—but no liking for those which came before. He knew England well enough to know how backward was his country by English standards. After three hundred years of rule from Whitehall, whose fault was that ? Emigration was barred these days—England alone would take Irishmen and treat them as British subjects, though ' Dev ' wished to ' cut the connection.' He thought it was time for a new settlement between England and Ireland : Ireland was to forgive us, I gathered, and we were to forget our debts, and then all would be well. Ireland was poor and getting poorer, for all the fine talk in the Dail : the taxes heavier, and things dearer.

A local resident took up the tale. Hard work brought good wages in England, but nowhere else could a man earn money and bring it home to spend or invest. At least 20,000 Irishmen on balance left Ireland for England every year and there would be more going soon. They did well as a rule, for they were country lads and not work-shy like town corner-boys the world over. The population was increasing nearly 1 per cent. per annum, but the marriage rate was ' down entirely '—young men dare not obey Nature and marry and it was bad for them. Girls would not marry a young farmer. The land might hold more, but the girls expected more out of life than

husbands could give. There was nothing for the young men to do but mischief.

It was true that Ireland had eight million souls a century ago and less than half the number now, but it cost five times as much to keep an Irishman to-day. There was next to no drink then and no tobacco except home grown. They thanked God if they had meat once a week, and they did not travel abroad except as soldiers or sailors. The Irish would not go back to that standard of life without a bloody struggle.

‘Would de Valera win the next election in two years at latest?’ I asked.

‘I believe so entirely,’ he replied. ‘There’s pensions for the old, and pensions for the blind and for officials and the dole for the young people, and the bread line and free meat and what not. It’s all bribery, but it works so that the worse things get, the stronger becomes de Valera and his people. There’s ruin ahead, but it’s a long way off yet.’ He was a cheery philosopher, for all his prophecies of woe. He departed the better for a pint of Guinness and a silver coin, and I for his ‘blessing.’

On Sunday the village was early astir with men and women, young and old, coming to Mass by cart, bicycle, and on foot, all dressed in their best and not less attractively because the material was of the simplest; they had no reason to feel ashamed of their attire. At ten o’clock was a second service, also well attended. Sports were advertised for the afternoon on Candeehy Strand at three o’clock, a little harbour five miles away at the end of a sandy spit between the two bays. We arrived punctually, to find ourselves an hour early, for in these parts the post office alone keeps ‘new time,’ the rest of the world sticks to ‘old time’ winter and summer. Daylight saving has no value to hard-working farmers who have learned centuries ago how to make the most of the sun.

The first event was a canoe race round the bay—five canoes, locally made of canvas stretched over laths of

lance-wood, by men whose skill has passed from father to son for generations. It was a perfect setting for a race, with Atlantic rollers bursting in clouds of spray on the Seven Hogs—a row of islands outside; on each side of the bay lay a hamlet, and one at the centre filled by holiday makers. It was a fine exhibition of strength and skill of men in perfect condition. Items followed in close succession on the beach—a cycle race, races for boys, and finally a dancing competition. The umpire was the parish priest, in black coat and top hat. A small English boy took the second prize amid loud regrets that he had not taken first prize, ‘seeing that he was a visitor and ran barefoot like the rest’—a spontaneous exhibition of courtesy that one would not always meet in England. The organisation, of which I gather the parish priest was the moving spirit, was as good as the temper of all present. Beer and spirits could be purchased throughout the day close by. The licensing laws in Ireland assume adults to be reasonable beings and only stipulate for early closing (10 P.M.). I gather that drunkenness is no commoner than in England, perhaps because money is scarce and liquor of all kinds costs as much as in England. The taxes were put up ‘by the English’ during the war and have not been lowered by subsequent governments.

The water supply of the Magharees is bad—when rain water fails they rely on shallow wells yielding water of such poor quality that horses will go thirsty for days before touching it. They will have a better supply from the mainland next year. But for the war, it would have been put in twenty years ago: the plans had been made, but work was deferred in 1915 as a war economy. Yet the inhabitants—so the doctor told me—are as healthy and strong as any in this part of Kerry, and in no part of Ireland is the general level of health better. The birth rate indeed was but one-third that of what it was thirty years ago; the marriage rate was far lower and the average age of marriage higher. The people were poorer



now than they had been since the war—but honourable and law abiding.

In the centre of the village stands a memorial cross, officially erected two years ago, to two men killed in 1922, fighting not against 'the English' but 'the Cosgrave' Government—'fine young men they were—big and strong and well-liked all round here.' Before it lay, not flowers but a single rosary.

Close by was the headquarters of the 'Garda,' as the police are called in Ireland—a fine-looking body of men. Every fourth house in the village was a shop, the counter at one end of the main living room, or a tavern. 'One good shop would do for all and be cheaper'—thus our exotic planners of P.E.P. The comment of a local friend was noteworthy. 'Anyone can open a shop—everyone knows how much and how little profit there is in it. It prevents discontent and helps to keep the old people happy: it's little enough they make, and most things they sell are just as cheap and of as good quality as you can buy in any great town.' Indeed my own small purchases were, item for item, no more costly than at any great chain-store in London.

Between rainstorms over a heavy choppy sea, three men who had competed in Sunday's racing took us from the Magharees to an island—one of the Seven Hogs—two miles off the coast, in a canoe, so light that two men could carry it with ease in and out of the water. On the central island stands the ruins of an ancient church—perhaps a thousand years old, for it is surrounded by *clocháns*, circular beehive structures with solid stone roofs, some nine feet in diameter, one with a souterrain. Just outside the church stands an ancient cross made of a single slab of limestone roughly shaped without a chisel; near by are a group of houses which have been inhabited for generations by families who cultivate a dozen or so

fields on the island—the crops of sugar beet and barley seemed to be above the average—and run a few sheep on the western island and keep a single horse for ploughing.

To the west Brandon Head, and Brandon Point beside it, stood stark on the sky-line; behind them Mount Brandon, crowned by an ancient oratory sacred to Saint Brendan, who was born on the opposite side of the Bay at Fenit in 483 and was buried in 576 in the monastery he founded at Clonfert. He was a Christian ‘Ulysses,’ and the story of his seven years’ voyage in prose and verse was a medieval classic. He is not forgotten in these parts: ‘The Way of the Saints’ leads to the summit of his peak, and on it 20,000 persons assembled in 1868. I saw at the foot a very perfect *clochán*, now used to shelter ducks and geese, and near Castlegregory I found in a pasture a fine stone axe of a type not uncommon in Palæolithic England. It is now in Dublin Museum. Here too I saw, in a shop, a fine pair of horns, of the long extinct Irish elk, dug out of the Magharee sandhills some years ago. The Irish wolf has gone: the Irish deer will soon follow the elk. Of the castle from which the village takes its name no trace remains. But it has a romantic history. It was built, or rebuilt, by one Gregory Hoare, an Irish chief of the sixteenth century. Lord Grey’s army, on its way to attack the Spanish insurgents at Smerwick, was quartered here: with them were the poet Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh. Cromwell’s troops destroyed the fort later: all the good deeds of the Congested Districts Board have not sufficed to efface the memory of that black day.

The first persons to be called on by anyone who would see more than the natural beauties of sea and land in Ireland are the parish priest, the doctor, and the schoolmaster. All helped to enlighten me from a fresh angle. The only guide book was written by the schoolmaster—himself a native of Stradbally; the doctor’s experience

covered twenty-seven years. Governments come and go, but these men individually, and as parts of a body corporate, are the repositories both of authority and of tradition.

To record their conversations would be an impertinence: they did their best to help me to understand. For the rest, never did we meet anything but the most kindly courtesy. This in a country where people—even children—graciously decline to take money in payment for small errands; where greetings to strangers on the road are a matter of course; and where—as in the East—passing travellers are welcome to milk and bread without price.

One day I got into conversation with some young farmers who had been reading in the papers the claims of Italy and Germany for 'more room.' At last the fire kindled, and they spoke their thoughts, of which the following is a summary: 'What is wrong with the world is that young men cannot do as their fathers did and go abroad to earn a living where they can. One of the rights of man that the League of Nations forgot is his right to move, to settle where he likes and to marry and make a home. That is what we Irish have done all along: now we are up against it like them. Australia won't take us, Canada does not want us, the United States as good as bar us, New Zealand has no need for us, even Argentina turns us down. There's only England left; and even there we are up against trade unions and Unemployment Insurance and 'green cards,' though good men may still work there and save a bit. It's a pity they disbanded the old Irish regiments. They say the Royal Air Force won't take Free Staters; will that spread?'<sup>1</sup>

'There's more men coming back to the old country than are going to the Dominions,' I observed.

'That may be,' retorted one; 'but they are being

<sup>1</sup> This is inaccurate: there are difficulties, but it is possible to surmount them.

pushed out, mostly, and the young ones cannot get in and take their chance.'

'If another war should come the cause will not be armaments, nor dictators, nor tariffs, nor even Parliaments and all their talk, but the closing of the ports of the world against able-bodied men and women whose labour would bring wealth and make employment for others. We have all of us brothers and sisters and cousins abroad: we cannot join them. There's 1500 ex-service men in Tralee alone who have seen the world. They and their sons are all cooped up here. It's the same in European countries, and those folk are as good as we are on the job, good citizens, not afraid of hard work, but there's no return on any amount of work on a few acres. If America and the Dominions would open their gates to good men and women, and if Great Britain would forget de Valera and this money business and let us go as far afield as we will and find our level, with or without settlement loans and all the rest, the world would settle down soon enough.'

They were, of course, putting only one side of the case, and from only one point of view; but their views—Kerry farmers do not write to *The Times*—deserve attention.

'*Tout comprendre*,' wrote Madame de Stael, '*rend très indulgent*.' The path on which the Irish of the Free State have been set by their elected rulers is stony: none can yet say whither it will lead them. It is easy to see the attractions of separatism to a people so different from us: yet the Irish are greater travellers even than ourselves and may ask with us '*quae regio in orbe terrarum non plena cruore nostro?*' No one can fail to sympathise with the desire to establish the Irish language, even at great sacrifice, as firmly as Welsh is established in Wales, and French in Quebec. Yet for good or ill their future is bound up with that of the English-speaking races. *Regnavit dominus, irascantur populi*: 'The Lord is King, be the people never so unquiet.' They will

recognise no other ruler: Ireland will never be well governed. Nowhere are the systems grouped under the name of Tammany more firmly entrenched. Few of the postulates of democratic government in England can be applied to Ireland. But personal bonds are strong and can be strengthened, and Ireland is, and will remain, a Christian land, but not a comfortable one.

The worst thing we could do would be to hamper the free entry of Irish men and women to this country. The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages: agriculture would fare ill in many parts without Irish labour, and we should be doing just what we sometimes deplore in the U.S.A. and the Dominions.

## CHAPTER VI

OCTOBER 1935

For God's sake do not drag me into another war. I am worn down and worn out with crusading and defending Europe. I must think a little of myself. I am sorry for the Spaniards. I am sorry for the Greeks. I deplore the fate of the Jews. The people of the Sandwich Islands are groaning under the most distressing conditions. Baghdad is oppressed; Tibet is not comfortable—the world is bursting with sin and sorrow, but am I to be champion of the Decalogue? Am I to be eternally raising troops and armies to make all men good and obedient? We have just done settling Europe and I am afraid the consequence will be that we shall cut each other's throats.

SYDNEY SMITH (1823).

ON my way north to speak at a political meeting I found myself at lunch opposite an apprentice on his way home after two years' absence on the seven seas in merchant vessels. He had just done his four years, and now, at twenty-one, was starting to study for his 'ticket.' I envied him his knowledge of practical geography and international trade; Rio and the River Plate, Hong Kong and Yokohama, Sydney and the Straits, Basrah and Bombay, Suez and Panama—he had seen them all. His cargoes had been as various as the countries he had visited. He had an eye for ships—his father had followed the sea and his grandfather too—and also for scenery. His outlook was tolerant, though he had seen enough in Russian ports to put that country at the bottom of the list. He had been on shore every spare moment, by night and by day: he studied memorial stones and antiquities when they were near at hand, but also living men—and women. He went back to his seat to get his diary and album, both a credit to him.

The hours were long at sea: longer still in port—checking cargo in and out was a laborious and responsible task with many snags. It was hard lying in the old ships; the new craft were better by far, but he was too full of life to have time for grousing. He took things as they came; his stomach could hold anything except foreign liquor. Of recent Board of Trade inquiries into ships lost in the Atlantic he spoke with justified warmth. He was on his way to Goole, and we parted at Doncaster. I hope my son will grow up as lively and as open-eyed to what the world offers.

A motor-van driver, still in his teens, came one day this month to air his grievance on the strength of a casual office acquaintance since his van-boy days. It was now his job to drive into London daily from the country to collect pig-swill. His employer allowed him only four hours for the round trip: when delayed by heavy traffic 'the old man' cursed him for loitering. The police had caught him exceeding the speed limit and summoned him before the 'beaks.' They had fined him £2 on his first offence, and talked at him too. His employer has told him to pay the fine himself, or find another job. He was married and could not flick up his heels and say what he thought. He had heard the bench deal with a similar case just before his came on—a richly dressed young woman driving a two-seater sports car: her excuse was that she was in a hurry to get to a party. The bench beamed on her, joked with her, and fined her 20s., which she laughingly paid, throwing a five-pound note to the clerk, who likewise smiled on her as he gave her the change.

When my young friend's turn came he asked for time to pay: the clerk frowned and asked the police, who looked doubtful. The magistrate said, 'I suppose we must,' and threatened him with prison if he did not pay on the due date. The seeming injustice rankled. My preference for stipendiary courts for motoring offences is

strengthened by such tales: I wrote to the Clerk of the Court with regard to the time allowed for payment. His curt, almost discourteous, reply substantially confirmed the story as told me.

As I was travelling up to town one evening a youth leapt breathlessly into the carriage, and, sitting opposite to me, produced from a suit-case full of books the poems of Pierre Ronsard. I recognised him as the booking clerk of a suburban station, and we began to talk. He was twenty-two and had done four years with the railway and was beginning to feel shadows closing around him. He would be a railway clerk for the rest of his life unless he moved soon. He had been to Germany as an exchange student, and had walked for a fortnight in the Ardennes. He had tried the Auvergne Mountains, but they were nothing compared with Scotland. He was one of the great tribe of London-Scottish; though bred a Cockney, his spiritual home was in the Highlands. It was something to be on a railway which gave a free holiday ticket to Cape Wrath. Once up there he walked and slept on the heather. He lived 'on the air,' with little in his pack but a few books, chiefly poetry. 'That's what gets me.' In six years he had acquired, second-hand, some hundreds of books, which filled his father's house and overflowed into the lodgings in which he spent most nights. We talked of books and of the joys of walking, and his eyes grew bright; for a bicycle he had no use.

He was wondering whether it was not time to 'chance his arm'—to live dangerously and seek his fortune in other fields. 'If I go on like this,' he declared, 'I shall get tired of life. Perhaps I have been too well educated. There's things I can do. I don't care how hard I work, but where's the opportunity?' He had thought of the Army and of the Navy, but he would never feel happy with comrades in the ranks—'More's the pity, for there's nothing wrong with them.' He feared that the sea offered no career to-day, even as a steward, for there were



long spells adrift on shore. Still, he had his books and visions. We discussed evening classes, and the ways and means of finding sufficient scope and new associative loyalties. Of this side of Young England all of us are dimly aware, but the reality is sometimes poignant.

A few hours later, after presiding at a concert, I was again on my way north to Newcastle by the night train—sharing a compartment with a Darlington man who had been seeing, for the first time, the sights of London since 5 A.M. with his father and brother, who lay prone on the seats next door. He was full of what he had seen; his father knew London and they had not wasted a moment. It was his first trip south—he had never gone farther north than Jedburgh or farther afield than Blackpool. He was twenty-three and had just finished five years' steady employment as a saw-sharpener. 'That's a skilled trade,' I observed; 'it takes all of five years to get into, and another five years to learn all there is to know.' 'More'n that,' he responded; 'I reckon to learn something fresh every month: new temperings and new alloys, and new uses for saws. Unless you know all about the job, something will go wrong, and they'll surely blame it on you. Set the teeth too wide and the saw will break; set them too fine and the saw will jam. It all depends on the metal it's made of and what it's cutting. It's harder than ever just now, with business getting better and so few men who know the trade that the foremen are always pushing me to finish the job; and a saw-sharpener cannot afford to hurry.'

He was fond of walking on Sundays and he played football; watched matches in the winter. The label on my bag caught his eye: 'Arnold Wilson.' 'Do you know him?' he said eagerly. 'He's great—a man to watch—as quick on his legs as any man I ever saw. Is that his bag? Is he on this train?' I had to confess the bag was mine and that I did not know my namesake—

Darlington's centre-forward—but I joined in hoping that his marriage, only the week before, would not spoil a promising career. An idea occurred to him. 'Are you Major Arnold Wilson, Carpentier's trainer?' he asked hopefully. I again had to disclaim the distinction. 'You'll not mind my asking—I thought perhaps you might be somebody.' He relegated me to a decent obscurity and we fell to talking of moors and climbs—he knew and loved Cumberland and the Roman Wall—till sleep came upon us.

The return journey the following night was less luxurious: the train was crowded. My fellow-passengers were a batch of men going south to take up work with the Government Small Arms Factory at Enfield. They were all, as they proudly put it, 'from Elswick, out of Armstrong's,' a good mechanic's pedigree but, as one of them remarked, apologising for 'a bit of a rough house,' which had heralded their arrival on the platform, 'free and easy with each other, but meaning no offence to passengers.' Cigarettes all round helped them to settle down, and they began to talk.

'Yes,' I knew Enfield: 'lodgings would be all right,' but dearer than in the North: a sixpenny-return omnibus ride would take them to the Arsenal football ground, and to other places of pilgrimage. 'Were there plenty of cinemas?' They mentioned four which were summarised in a Newcastle paper as follows:

*The Sacred Flame.*

. . . The murderer-mother is relieved of the task, and the bed-ridden airman husband, who forms the barrier between the love of his wife and brother, commits suicide. This is strong meat. . . .

*Bright Eyes.*

A Shirley Temple confection of sweetness and appeal, in which she sings 'On the Good Ship Lollipop.' She is the pet of an airport, and James Dunn is her special protector.

*The Devil is a Woman.*

Lovely Marlene Dietrich rises from a cigarette factory to be a power among men. Shows how easy it is to break hearts.

*After Office Hours.*

Another reporter-and-society girl melodrama, attractively conventional and swift in action.

I thought of Milton's sheep 'Swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw, rot inwardly and foul contagion spread.' But these men were not rotting inwardly. The effect was, as far as I could gather, simply negative. They did not regard anything they saw as having any relation to life. It was, in their own vernacular, 'tripe,' and 'soft slush,' but 'something to see and hear.'

One of them, the eldest, who had been a foreman in the busy old days, was resentful at the need for Newcastle men to go south—in hundreds—to make small arms at Enfield for the War Office: he knew that London was already overcrowded; and so was Enfield. They were promised regular work for six months or more. Why not place the orders in Newcastle? Why not transfer the machinery instead of the men? Three hundred men had been taken to Enfield alone, in one month; 45s. a week in lodgings was worth to a man only half as much as when it was earned by men who had their own homes close by. Families were broken up: sons could no longer help to keep the home fires burning. Young men were going, placing an extra burden on their fathers and mothers. 'Place orders in the North!' he repeated. 'What's the good of all this talk about "distressed areas" when Government departments are the worst offenders?' As things have turned out he was wiser than the War Office.

The other men listened, but only one—a fine-looking young man, neatly dressed and well-spoken—made any comment. 'It's a case of take the job or get struck off at "the Labour",' he observed without bitterness. 'When a man's been laid off for six months he cannot

pick and choose.' The rest murmured assent, but said nothing.

We reached King's Cross before dawn, and I wished them good luck in their new jobs. The young man followed me to the refreshment-room and asked me to 'have a cup' with him. I had said I knew Enfield; could I say if he had a chance to get a house? The employment exchange had told him that if he got a house within three months they would pay for bringing his furniture and his wife and child down. He was a married man, with a young wife and a baby boy just born. She had 'cried something cruel' when he left her on Sunday night; she could not bear to see him off. He dared not lose a chance of a good job; he could not leave her alone for long. Everything depended on finding a house at a rental which would leave enough to live on; they only paid 5s. 6d. at present—poor quarters—but the important thing was, how much was left to live on after the rent was paid. He hated the idea of having to put her and the baby into one room in lodgings, and if that was all he could get the exchange would not pay to move his bits of furniture. I told him how to set about putting his name down for a house, and I have seen him occasionally since; it took him a year to get a home.

October was an uneasy month for the chosen representatives of the Crown, for a General Election was imminent, but I carried on with my usual round of speeches and lectures. I spoke during the month to a political school at a south coast resort, the subject allotted to me being foreign politics. I did not attempt to water down my views, which were well—almost enthusiastically—received, but I should have preferred to talk on domestic questions. I wish that more supporters of the National Government were interested in and students of severely practical aspects of the social life of the nation. The social services, alike national, quasi-national and com-

mercial, are intimately interwoven with the fabric of life for the vast majority of adult men and women. They know roughly by experience how they work, but they cannot make their voice heard when the wheels creak or, worse, grind some unfortunate into the dust. 'National' services include the Employment Exchanges and the distribution of unemployment benefit, the Post Office and the distribution of Old Age Pensions. Both are nationwide services, administered by an efficient bureaucracy within the framework of an Act of Parliament which makes no provision for elasticity to meet hard cases.

A woman whose case came before me recently was deserted thirty years ago by her first husband within a year of the marriage. Some years later she took up with another man and they lived together as man and wife for twenty-five years or so. One day she learned that her first husband was dead—in Australia. She and her man at once married: twenty-one months later he died. She was refused a widow's pension, for marriage lines are an essential qualification, and the time limit is statutory. I have known many cases where pension rights have been lost owing to wrong information given by agents of Approved Societies, in whose defence it may fairly be urged that the regulations are so complicated as to be often unintelligible to intelligent persons. Among the quasi-national services are the National Health Insurance Schemes. Everyone who has studied the working of the Acts at close quarters knows that though expenditure has rapidly increased the service given by these vital elements in social welfare have not increased in proportion. Almost all insured persons I know, both men and women, would prefer, if they could afford it, to pay the doctor or the dentist or the nurse the usual fee as a private client and not demand service as a panel patient. The school medical service varies enormously, the dental science is grotesquely inadequate. The medical benefits apply to insured persons only, not to their wives

and children (except maternity benefit). The standard benefits do not include dental or ophthalmic sciences ; there is great and unjustified variation in the payment of ' additional benefits ' between one Society and another. The Approved Society system is complicated and extravagant, the overhead charges of administration being often over 25 per cent. and averaging 22 per cent., and it is not linked up with local public health services and authorities.

Of the commercially managed social services the principal is that known as Industrial Assurance.<sup>1</sup> Under this system two out of three persons in the land hold between them over ninety-six million policies on their own lives or on the lives of other persons. The premium income is nearly £70 millions a year. Of eleven million new policies taken out every year at least five million lapse without giving any protection. The object is to provide burial money ; it is a very expensive method of saving, for, though it is almost universal, it is not a compulsory automatic contribution, but is collected weekly or monthly at the door, at an overhead cost which is equivalent to nearly 4*d.* out of every 9*d.* collected.

Then there is the fraternity of funeral directors or undertakers, great and small. Half a million persons die annually ; in nine cases out of ten the cost of the funeral is anything from one month to three months' wages. Burial Boards neither discourage extravagance or make economy easy, and one person in eleven who dies in Greater London is buried as a pauper at the cost of the public.

These are but examples, taken almost at random, of the sort of questions as to which the Tory Party should be thoroughly well informed. They include in their ranks men and women of leisure, and a great number of educated persons of every age and either sex who could

<sup>1</sup> I have written very fully on this subject in conjunction with Prof. Hermann Levy in *Industrial Assurance* (O.U. Press, 1937).

and should master the intricacies of these subjects and learn where the yoke galls and how the burden may be lightened.

The forces now at work are deeper and more powerful than those which caused the French and the Industrial Revolutions. To find a parallel we must study the Reformation and the Renaissance, with the sudden diffusion of new knowledge and the break with the narrow bonds of traditional religion, the exultation of the power of the State and the birth of a new Social Order.

I said all this and more at another political school at Ashridge during the month. 'Socialists,' I concluded,

desire to see all means of production and distribution nationalised. They believe that private enterprise can no longer serve our needs. The Tory believes in private enterprise, and believes it has great tasks before it, but he believes in it as a means and not as an end, as an expedient which must be judged by its efficiency.

The attitude of the Tory Party towards the mining industry in the future will depend upon its efficiency and they would guard the rights of all classes—the consumer, worker and owner. We see the State as guardian of rights, and all rights connoted duties. We prefer State guidance to State control, and State control to State ownership.

The privileges of British citizenship are derived from the performance of duty in every sphere to which it might please God to call us, and those who exploit their privileged position, whether they be busmen or bankers—and I accuse neither—need not expect support. We cannot maintain the voluntary hospital system save by voluntary subscription. We cannot avoid compulsory service in the Territorials unless we voluntarily serve. We cannot avoid the evils of monopoly if men cut each other's throats by unfair competition.

Trade, like politics, is dirty only when the wrong men are in control; let us make sure that in politics, Local Government and in business we give a chance to the right men and that we support those very numerous men and women of public spirit who direct our great voluntary organisations.

In all these matters Tories must take the lead with courage. Englishmen cannot be driven, but they can be led by those whom they trust. Bad leadership is at the bottom of most troubles. Our task is to point a better way. . . . Toryism is not only a Party spirit but a way of life ; not only a political attitude of mind, but a regenerative social and moral force. We want to make a better Britain, we want to be strong at home and abroad. We want to give our citizens and our youth the opportunity to develop the best in them.

On June 27 the final results of the ' Peace Ballot ' were announced. This unofficial referendum on the subject of peace and war was initiated over a year ago under the auspices of the League of Nations Union, a body which I have never joined, or supported, as I have never regarded its leadership as so wise or informed as that of successive Governments, which it has generally opposed and done its best to weaken.

With a General Election impending the easy course would have been to pretend to support the ideals of the L.N.U. and to have preached its gospel of ' collective security ' on the platform. But I was sure that the hollowness of the phrase, and the unreality of the conceptions it was supposed to embody, would soon be apparent and I did not wish to hoist false colours. I declared myself on every occasion to have no belief in collective security and, in particular, to be opposed to sanctions against Italy.

Matters in Europe were reaching a crisis, and during October (as related in *Walks and Talks Abroad*) I visited Rome and was received in audience by Signor Mussolini. What I said and heard there confirmed me in my conviction that economic sanctions if fully applied meant a war which would engulf Europe. I said as much in public, and during this month was one of a group of members who begged the Prime Minister to have nothing to do with them.



Some good friends of mine in the constituency regarded this line of policy with alarm. Even if I was right, it was not expedient: I should forfeit the support of the League of Nations Union, Liberals, and of some Conservatives. I should have done better to offer incense to the false gods, even if I did not believe in them. I respected my friends' motives, but I disagreed with them.

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget.

Not such defenders nor such aid the times require.

I have no reason to regret my decision, for at every meeting during October, and I addressed many, I found support, often in unexpected quarters, in places so far apart as Llandrindod Wells and York and Royston and Newcastle. On October 31 the political campaign in preparation for the General Election began in earnest. I was formally adopted in the afternoon, and addressed a public meeting, no longer as a Member of Parliament but as a candidate, the same evening.

## CHAPTER VII

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1935

### The General Election and After

γηράσκω δ' αὖτις πολλὰ διδασκόμενος

I grow old constantly learning many new things.

PLUTARCH. *Life of Solon.*

MY first public engagement this month, fixed long before the date of the Election, was to be guest of a village cricket club and to hand out the prizes. The hut, about to be replaced by a fine village hall, was full to its limited capacity: some sixty men of all ages were already in their places when I arrived to take my place at the narrow high table, between the squire and the parson.

It was one of the parishes whose Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages since Elizabethan times have been published, and I had memorised the names of the First Eleven and noted those which appeared in the Sixteenth Century Registers. This gave me a good opening, for every second name was in the register three centuries ago. Landowners had come and gone but the aristocracy of the soil remained, *adscriptus glebae*, 'to maintain,' in the words of Ecclesiasticus, 'the state of the world, for all their desire was in the work of their hands.' They had gone all over the world as soldiers and sailors, as emigrants and even as convicts, more often than not for some trifling offence; leaving their bones on every sea and on every shore.

To the enduring qualities of this stock we owe our

backbone, from it we derive our strength. They are, in truth, the 'old families' of England, with pedigrees, if they should trouble to ascertain them, which most men in high places might envy; because so seldom childless, they survive longer than most of the families who have gained much but have lost, only too often, the power or the desire to perpetuate themselves—of all racial tendencies the most dysgenic. (The members of the present Parliament average about 2 children apiece.)

All this I said, and more, before speaking in praise of cricket, a game so ancient that references to it appear in the accounts of the Royal Household five hundred years ago and, on the Statute Book, as a dangerous competitor with archery, in 1477.

At midday on Monday, November 4, I duly presented myself at Hitchin Town Hall to appear before the Clerk of the Elections, to declare myself formally as a candidate, to present my nomination papers, and to make the necessary cash deposit. My opponent, Mr. Charles Lindgren, was also present; we exchanged courtesies and were photographed together. Then to Letchworth to declare a new factory open.

From this time onwards till polling day on Thursday, November 14, I spent every evening 'in the field,' speaking at three or four different places every day to audiences varying from 20 to 400. The constituency is not exceptionally large, some 200 square miles and some 60,000 electors, but it includes six towns and some forty villages, each with an independent life and its own meeting place. If every hall had been filled to capacity I might have been heard and seen by no more than 6000 persons in all—10 per cent. of those whose votes I sought. In practice probably no more than 5 per cent. heard me, and even that was more than my opponent could claim.

The wireless is not open to a candidate; he cannot attempt to solicit votes in person from door to door;

for that he must rely upon his supporters. Faced with this uphill task he can only, in the language of the 126th Psalm, 'go forth on his way weeping and bearing forth good seed,' and hope for the best. The local papers will give prominence to his speeches as well as to those of his opponent and can be relied upon not to distort the arguments of either side. The candidate who is already known has, of course, an immense advantage over the new arrival. In a rural constituency the side that has most cars to carry voters to the polling stations—some sixty in number in my case—doubtless has a certain advantage, though no voter would hesitate, I hope, to use a car bearing the colours of one candidate in order to take him to the polls to vote for the other, and drivers of cars had, in my case, instructions to make this plain.

Such are some of the reflexions of a candidate as he speeds through the night down dark lanes to a succession of brightly lighted schools and village halls to address small groups of men and women. Should he take their silence for consent to his policies? Should he cut short his speech—which cannot last more than twenty minutes, for he has other meetings before him—in order to give time for questions? The meeting has been in progress for some time before he arrives. What has the chairman said? There is no time to ask. The rural voter, for all his good manners, is as good a judge as any townsman of any political issue, and often better able to formulate a plain question. Here are some specimens culled between November 1 to 14 :

If there is to be an armaments race, will the second be better off than the last?

What will happen if Italy leaves the League?

If land-workers are to be insured against unemployment, will not farmers, under stress of competition with each other, stand men off whenever the weather is bad, or work slack, instead of keeping them on, as most of them do now, all the year round?

Will there be a different rate of benefit and contribution for the higher paid cowman and shepherd, who has a real steady job, and for the lower paid farm-hand, who cannot rely upon steady employment ?

(From a Tynesider.) No Government can do anything for the place where I come from till it gets rid of the moth-eaten bastards who run the local councils. (Loud cheers from his fellows.) What do you say about that ?

(At the village of Lilley, near Luton.) How is it that they make laws in this country for everybody but the Crown lands ? Why should they bring an agreement along and say 'Put your name to this,' and put the rents up ? What is the good of laws which apply to some and not to others ? Can you tell me why the Housing Acts don't apply to the Crown lands ?

I snatched an hour between meetings to go just outside the constituency to call upon a Durham miner, married, with two children, who had found employment in the South. He was just back from work and was sitting in the warm kitchen beside a fire with one child on his knee, the teapot on the hob close by, and his wife was washing the baby in a tub by the fire. But we were old friends, and I was welcomed with real cordiality. They had settled down well. He was on piece-work with a good mate from his own northern village. Work was steady and he was saving a bit, but would take a week off at Christmas to go home. He was thinking of bringing his brother down. A Tynesider was worth two of his neighbours. These southerners were not to his liking. Good workers, but unfriendly, and gossipers—'you would not believe how unkind are their tongues !' The district nurse was a jewel. The parson was friendly. The landlord was a bit difficult and did not want him to keep a dog, because, in a row of seven cottages, neighbours complained of noise. He was going to buy a tandem bicycle with a side-car. Could I tell her, asked the wife, how to get yeast in these parts, as she had always baked her own bread

and did not think baker's bread was good for 'the childher.' I was able to give her the information.

This is industrial transference in practice. I foresee a future for local societies of Tynesiders, Yorkshiremen, and other expatriated tribesmen. This family had found many friends, but every one of them was an immigrant from the North. So strong, in spite of all levelling tendencies, is the force of environment and home.

It was a quiet election. Only once was I subject to an abusive interruption, not in my own constituency but in another district whither I had gone one evening to lend a hand to a hard-pressed colleague. The heckler was deliberately and crudely offensive, but did not persist. After the meeting he met me outside with a few friends and the following colloquy ensued.

'I bear ye no grudge, Mister!'

'I should hope you did not, but what made you call me those dirty names?'

'They told me it was a political meeting, but it was now't but a bloody lecture, and I said to myself the place wants livening up.'

'That's no reason why you should call me a bastard.'

'That was the first thing that came into my head.'

'You're a nice sort of fellow, if that's the first thing to come into your head!'

'Ah—don't talk so much,' he replied, slapping me on the back, 'come into the house and have a drink!'

I accepted his invitation and spent half an hour, before leaving in the last train for King's Cross, with him and his mates. I did not convert them, I fear, but I hope I helped them, as they did me, to believe in the good faith of political opponents.

My opponent and I often left by the same train and compared notes. It was clear that not more than 1 per cent. of the electors, say 600 in all, were likely to have heard us both. 'Like going to church,' observed a supporter; 'people only go to listen to the man who

preaches what they think they believe in.' We were heard with courtesy everywhere, cross-examined almost always with good humour, and harried alike by questionnaires from earnest societies in London, or by their members in the constituency. We, and our respective wives, addressed circular letters to all electors, who also received accurate instructions as to where to poll, how to mark the polling paper, and when a car would call for them. One set of devoted helpers made a door-to-door pilgrimage to ask for votes. Another, at the polling-booth, checked the lists to make sure that all the sheep entered the fold, and rounded up, as the day wore on, the wanton creatures who remained outside.

The outcome of the Election is now ancient history, but it is worth while placing on record at this point in my narrative, that of the 615 seats, 431 went to the National Government and 184 to the Opposition; the National Government's elected supporters included 33 Liberal Nationals, 8 National Labour and 3 'National' candidates.

Of 67 women candidates who stood, nine were elected.

The electors numbered  $29\frac{1}{2}$  millions, of whom  $21\frac{1}{2}$  millions voted, or, if allowance be made for 67 unopposed constituencies, 23 millions. On the same basis,  $12\frac{3}{4}$  millions voted for and  $10\frac{1}{2}$  millions against the National Government. The National Liberal vote totalled 866,000, National Labour 340,000, National 86,000. On the Opposition side 1,400,000 voted Liberal, 68,000 Independent Liberal, 139,000 I.L.P., 27,000 Communist, 217,000 Independents, 56,000 Irish Republican (Northern Ireland).

## CHAPTER VIII

DECEMBER 1935

If I were not a preacher of the Gospel, I know no station on earth that I would rather fill than that of a schoolmaster or teacher of boys.

MARTIN LUTHER.

LOOKING back on the Election, nothing impressed me more profoundly than the sound patriotism and good sense of the masses of the electors—whatever the colour of the member they elected. We must see to it that there is during the next four years no growth of party strife or bitterness. The 8,500,000 who voted against the National Government are as good Englishmen as the 11,500,000 who voted for it. They are as patriotic, public spirited, and as good citizens and parents. The intelligentsia who have attached themselves to the Labour Opposition have done it little good. Like the flies in *Æsop's* fable, they buzz round the head of the oxen who draw the cart, and imagine that they are providing motive power or, at least, 'ginger.'

What, then, divides us? Not character, nor religion, not race, class, or occupation, nor, except in a limited degree, the position we occupy in society. What separates the two great parties can only be described as divergent and often blind loyalties and, less often, blind prejudices and blind passions. For the next four years our business must be to open each other's eyes to the great stretch of country before us which we must travel together.



The Labour Party includes the Socialist League, the Trade Unions, and the Co-operative Societies and Union. The Trade Unions have a powerful organisation: they provide most of the funds. The 'Co-ops.' have 7,000,000 members. To the fathers of the movement at Rochdale political neutrality was a vital principle; only lately have they joined forces with the Labour Party. It is an easy and natural partnership so far as the Trade Unions are concerned. With the Socialist League it is unnatural and unreal. The National Labour Party could claim with reason and logic the allegiance of all except the Socialist League. The Co-operative Societies are in reality a conservative force: they desire to own and control property for the benefit of their members. They cannot logically or in practice be in favour of 'nationalisation' as a principle. They and their followers wish to compete with the great monopolies and vested interests in the supply to the public of public needs. In this battle we should wish them well. When, however, they seek to drive the smaller shopkeeper out of business, and to obtain immunities from taxation to which private business is liable, many part company with them. If I had to choose between getting my meat or wheat or meal, my butter and bacon or anything else, from a chain store or a multiple shop with its management and financial roots in the City and its tentacles all over the world, or to go to the 'Co-op.' shop, I would choose the latter. But if I can go to a private trader, who runs his own business at his own risk, I will deal with him, and in fact always do so, because I believe the small shopkeeper and individual business man is one of the greatest assets the country can have. Let us not blind ourselves, then, to the place which the 'Co-ops.' can fill. They may be a bulwark against Socialism of the Communist colour: they are certainly a bulwark against 'big business' of the kind which I fear because it is too big, and because it saps the individuality and independence of all.

The 'Co-ops.' arose as a product of the spirit of the old Friendly Societies. The Trade Unions are a much older manifestation of the same spirit. They have developed, inevitably, into a political power, but they are normally a conservative force. On balance, like other folk, they have done good—when they might have done better. The loyalty of their members has sometimes been worthy of better leaders; but leaders and rank and file alike would revolt against Socialism of a type that is preached by the intelligentsia of the movement, the careerists, the dreamers, the professors, and the young people whose experience of life comes from books, not men. The 'Co-ops.' and Trade Unions alike gain in numbers, but suffer in quality, because they profess and claim to represent a particular set of people. They do not take kindly to active co-operation with other parts of our society. We must show them a better way.

The House of Commons was never more crowded than on December 19 when Sir Samuel Hoare rose from a back bench to explain why he had resigned. Facing a House which was critical in nearly all and hostile in some parts, he spoke for nearly three-quarters of an hour and achieved, beyond all question, a personal triumph. Cheers came with increasing frequency as he explained the position which he had faced. Trouble in the East, and in Egypt, coincided with a growing dislike in France of the policy of sanctions against an aggressor, of which we were the leading exponents, and with a deepening emphasis on the need for peace by conciliation, even if it involved compromise.

Early in December it became clear that oil sanctions, if effective, would mean war between Great Britain and Italy, for no other Power had moved a man or a machine. He did not fear the ultimate outcome, but it might well be fatal to the League. He went abroad on medical advice: it was with Cabinet approval that he met M. Laval:

no time was to be lost. Oil sanctions were to be discussed five days hence. Some basis for discussion which might bring about a settlement must be sought. After two days' discussion with M. Laval he had worked out terms which were far less than Signor Mussolini had demanded and no more than the Negus, before hostilities, was willing to give. He was always afraid lest the League, and we ourselves, might induce Ethiopia to take up an attitude which might be fatal to their interests—as we had done to others (he doubtless had the Armenians and Assyrians in mind). Peace must come by negotiation or surrender: he believed it could only come by the former. He felt that he had for the moment lost public support, and he had therefore resigned. But he remained confident that he was right, and unrepentant. He was greeted when he sat down with a warmth accorded to few statesmen at the height of their careers and, soon after, left the House.

It remained for Mr. Baldwin to explain, in effect, that he had regretfully parted company with his second Foreign Secretary in six months in deference to public clamour both in the House and in the country. He told the House nothing of the abyss into which he had peered before turning back, like M. Laval. Nor did he say whether he would advance again or by what route. His speech did little to hearten the Opposition, nor to encourage his supporters, most of whom would have happily flocked into the lobbies behind Sir Samuel Hoare and gone thence to their constituencies to explain to them the reality of the menace to peace and to defend the policy which Mr. Baldwin and the Cabinet had accepted a week earlier.

Things seemed black that night; but I saw light ahead, for we were at last facing realities. Once we could make up our minds to do that, I had little fear of the ultimate issue.

One of the severest critics of the Government in the

House of Lords was the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose frequent incursions into foreign policy are without parallel in ecclesiastical history. An anthology of the utterances of the Bench of Bishops during the past decade if it could be compiled would make as strange reading as the declarations of some of their number during the last war. When disarmament was in fashion they urged it as a Christian principle: when rearmament became the vogue, after the General Election of 1935, they justified it as a Christian necessity. Without, apparently, having either visited any foreign countries, or having studied any objective statements as to the domestic policy of Italy or Germany, many Bishops hastened to condemn both—as lacking Christian foundations—and their occasional pastoral letters, in their references to foreign or domestic events, were strangely polemical in tone. But on the persecutions in Mexico, Russia and Spain they were discreetly silent. In regard to Spain they have often been remarkably ready to accept partisan statements as gospel.

To me, the most hopeful and important event of the month in Parliament was the issue, on December 20, of the text of a Bill to extend unemployment insurance to agricultural workers—a term later extended to include private gardeners.

The contribution was to be  $4\frac{1}{2}d.$  from workers, employers and the Exchequer, the rate of benefit 14s., as against 17s. in industry. What would the effect be? Would farmers be encouraged to dismiss men for short periods in bad weather by the knowledge that they could draw what is now, alas, known as 'the dole'? Would it thus make employment less regular? Would it encourage men to stick to the land instead of finding some better paid but less regular work? A cowman who works 60 hours in a 7-day week for 43s. or so, plus a few small allowances of free milk, etc., feels little better off for the knowledge that he can get 14s. a week if unem-

ployed, for there is no unemployment among skilled men in this branch of agriculture and very little in any other.

The general impression in the country was, on the whole, unfavourable; the least competent men would get it, the best workers would never want it, but would have to pay. Yet, to their credit be it said, the average agricultural worker was in favour of the Bill: it was an instalment of security for others, and was worth something in their eyes, as such.

I spent Christmas and the New Year at home, attending numerous functions which brought me into touch with the rich and various life of my constituency. The registered number of unemployed on December 16 was about 1,800,000, or 220,000 less than a year ago, and was slowly decreasing. Money was circulating more freely, for wages were tending to rise in advance of prices which had scarcely begun to move: the figures, in terms of millions of pounds per annum, looked impressive and I used them once in a political speech, but, having done so, my conscience smote me. Average figures mean little: the higher paid worker gets more: the lower paid worker gets perhaps an extra shilling a week, and in his Cost of Living Index the commodities which are rising in price bulk much more largely than in the budget of the higher paid categories. The main question should be: is the production, and consumption, of consumable goods rising? If so, are they being widely distributed? The answer to the first question is not in doubt, the second query has not yet been answered to my satisfaction.

Just before Christmas I visited one evening a home for epileptics, managed by a Roman Catholic sisterhood. It was the great day of the year. The inmates had staged a musical comedy; the dresses were brilliant and pleasing to the eye—they were largely made of paper; the big cast of players were word-perfect and sang their parts as well as they spoke them. All, from children of twelve

and fourteen to middle-aged folk, thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and very pretty they looked, well 'made-up,' in front of the footlights. The one essential for them was a full and enthusiastic house; that was not denied them, for the hall was packed. Of the 250 or so patients in the home, only about one in five had a record of epilepsy in the family; the others were casual cases, such as may occur in any walk of life, and to persons of any ancestry. The malady is not curable, but, in the peaceful surroundings and steady routine of the institution, attacks are reduced to the minimum. It kills about 2000 persons every year, and the mortality shows no signs of dropping. Here was courage and endurance—shown both amongst the patients and, above all, in the work of the staff, most of whom are literally devoted to this service. We need a new Order of Merit in recognition of such services—not for the satisfaction of those who might receive it, but for our own. No man who is entitled to wear several medals on his breast can watch their work without feeling that such women deserve some mark of His Majesty's favour no less than the great ones of the earth. Would it spoil the value of their work? The Order of the Red Cross has had no such effect, and all classes welcome the award of the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal to men and women who pass their lives in many spheres as servants of India.

Our system of awards for gallantry and devotion to duty is haphazard and deserves re-examination in the light of modern needs. It no longer serves its purpose and is unworthy of a great democracy. For our industrial heroes there are the Edward and Albert Medals, in gold and in bronze; for saving life at sea the Board of Trade Medal and the Life Saving Medals of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the Royal Humane Society, the Boy Scouts Association and others. For devoted service to the sick there are various grades of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and the Blood Transfusion Medal

of the British Red Cross Society, but nothing, for practical purposes, for which the voluntary hospitals and local authorities can recommend public servants.

As was observed by a good judge of such matters, Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P., in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for August 1936, modern war demands qualities of body and soul in our young men higher than those which any former kind of warfare has required. ' . . . We can still breed lads possessing to the full those qualities, and in numbers large enough to serve our purpose. . . . ' It remains for us to ' give them the inspiration and the supreme confidence in their mission which will enable them without fear and without hate ' to perform their tasks. I believe both parts of that statement to be equally true of hospital and other services which make heavy demands on the best of our young women. No one who has faced death alone in voluntary pursuit of some warlike aim, or in the attempt to save life in peace, would for a moment admit that the hope of honour or reward played any part in his mind, but few would deny that honourable recognition of long and meritorious public service, as of great deeds, helps to create an attitude of mind which is, ultimately, the deciding factor. That, indeed, is the very basis of every system of honour and rewards over the world. The human will, at supreme moments, transcends obedience, overleaps the bounds of prudence and disregards self-interest. As Bacon observed in a footnote to his essay ' On Death, '

There is no human passion so weak and contemptible that it may not easily be so heightened as to overcome the fear of death.

To overcome the dislike of monotony, to exercise patience and restraint with the weak and querulous patients is as hard a task, and it deserves greater encouragement than we now accord to it. British nursing has no equal in Europe: let us do what we can to show our pride and gratitude.

## CHAPTER IX

JANUARY 1936

The old age of Timoleon was cherished with much respect and kindness, as that of a common father ; at last he died of a slight illness co-operating with length of years. Some time being given by the people of Syracuse to prepare for his funeral, and for the neighbouring inhabitants and strangers to assemble, the whole was conducted with great magnificence. The bier . . . carried by young men in solemn pomp . . . was followed by many thousands of men and women whose laments, mingled with praise, showed that the honour now paid to his memory was the testimony of real sorrow and sincere affection. . . . The body was interred and a monument erected for him in the market-place, which was afterwards made a place of exercise for the youth of the city. They continued to make use of the form of government and the laws that he established and thus insured their happiness for a long course of years.

PLUTARCH. *Life of Timoleon.*

ON January 18 *The Times* reported in adjoining columns :

**ILLNESS OF THE KING.**

MR. KIPLING.

SOME DISQUIET.

Death early this morning.

*Bulletin late last night.*

The rest of the page was devoted to subjects which may be gathered from the headings :

**THE NAVAL CONFERENCE.**—*Rapid progress.*

**ITALIAN VICTORY.**—*Heavy Ethiopian casualties.*

‘ I PREFER TO RELY ON GUNS.’

THE TIME WILL COME WHEN WE MUST DEMAND OUR COLONIES BACK.—*Dr. Goebbels.*



**FRENCH CRISIS THREATENED.** M. HERRIOT  
TO RESIGN.

**STAVISKY TRIAL ENDED :** HEAVY SENTENCES.

Such items of news were forgotten as men read the news of the King's ill-health. It was his first indisposition since June, but the bulletin took a grave view.

The bronchial catarrh from which the King is suffering is not severe, but there have appeared signs of cardiac weakness which must be regarded with some disquiet.

The King was in his 71st year: Mr. Kipling, whose sudden illness lasted only five days, was seventy, having been born, like the King, in 1865 but six months later. The public instinctively regarded Mr. Kipling's death as an omen.

On Monday, January 20, *The Times* leader was headed *Vivat Rex*, which the Great Bible translates as 'God sende the Kyng lyfe,' but the news gave little hope that the prayer would be answered. The headings ran thus:

**THE KING'S ILLNESS.**

*Severe tax on the heart.*

A DAY WITHOUT NOTABLE  
CHANGE.

EFFECTS OF 1928.

*Anxiety still persists.*

WIRELESS BULLETINS.

COUNCIL OF STATE TO BE SET  
UP TO-DAY.

*Frequent Broadcasts.*

*The Prince of Wales with the Prime  
Minister.*

HERR HITLER'S MESSAGE.

CONCERN IN U.S.A.

FRENCH SYMPATHY.

PUBLIC ANXIETY IN LONDON.

*Prayers of the Empire.*

French Radicals' revolt, National  
Union Broken; Laval Ministry  
doomed. Confusion in America.  
New demands on the Budget.

STRAIN OF THE ILLNESS.

We learned, too, that burial in Poets' Corner was to be given to Rudyard Kipling, an honour proper to a unique figure in English literature. The world had been his parish; there were few regions he had not visited, no subject which it would have appeared strange for him to handle with mastery. He tirelessly sought accurate information upon matters of technique from masters of many crafts: yet he could and often did take all knowledge for his province, and he despised no field of speculation be it spiritual or scientific. I believe his reputation will grow with the years and will outlast that of all his contemporaries.

His political outlook changed with the years, and was closer to Lord Milner's than to that of any other statesman of first rank. Towards the end he felt, like Livy when he wrote the Preface to one of his last books, that he had already earned enough of reputation and might have ceased to write, were it not that his restless spirit was sustained by work. Like Livy, he held no public office but gave himself wholly to literature for more than forty years. His early works, in several collected editions, continue to be read and sold long after the conditions which they describe have ceased to exist, and it may be said of Kipling, as Martial said of Livy:

*Pellibus exiguis artatur Livius ingens,  
Quem mea non totum bibliotheca capit.*

*In vellum small great Livy now is dressed,  
My shelves could never take him uncompressed.*

He lived to see contraction of British influence where he had witnessed its expansion, to observe weakness and infirmity of purpose in the successors of men in whose courage and strength of purpose he had rejoiced—a period in which in Livy's words 'the might of a people which has long been very powerful is working its own undoing,' and was glad 'to avert his eyes from the troubles which our age has been witnessing for so many years, so long at

least as I am absorbed in the recollection of the brave days of old, free from every care which, even if it could not divert the historian's mind from the truth, might nevertheless cause it anxiety.'

The end came quickly : on Tuesday, January 21, I was waiting at the door for the boy with the paper. 'The King died before midnight,' he said, simply. 'I'm sorry for the Queen.'

I went to town that morning, arriving in time to hear Great Tom tolling at St. Paul's, and attended Parliament that evening, as required by the Succession to the Crown Act, 1707, to take the oath of allegiance to the new King. We attended without Writ of Summons, for the Great Seal, without which no such writ would be valid, was formally broken at the King's death, and the officers of the two Houses were unsworn and therefore without authority. I had mounted guard of honour to Queen Victoria as a cadet ; I had been decorated by Edward VII, who signed my Commission as a Second Lieutenant ; I had been received in audience by King George V. I prayed that the new sovereign might survive me. King Edward VIII attended that afternoon the Privy Council summoned to proclaim his accession, and declared to them that

The irreparable loss which the British Commonwealth of Nations has sustained by the death of His Majesty my beloved Father has devolved upon Me the duty of Sovereignty. I know how much you and all My Subjects, with I hope I may say the whole world, feel for Me in My sorrow and I am confident in the affectionate sympathy which will be extended to My dear Mother in Her overpowering grief.

When My Father stood here 26 years ago He declared that one of the objects of His Life would be to uphold constitutional Government. In this I am determined to follow in My Father's footsteps and to work as He did throughout His Life for the happiness and welfare of all classes of My Subjects.

I place My reliance upon the loyalty and affection of My peoples throughout the Empire, and upon the wisdom of their Parliaments, to support Me in this heavy task, and I pray that God will guide Me to perform it.

He then subscribed to the oath relating to the security of the Church of Scotland, which having been accomplished the faithful Commons took the oath of allegiance.

That afternoon, too, there met in the Palace of St. James the modern form of the most ancient assembly in the world, the descendants of the Common Council of the Norman Kings and so of the Witan, 'the wise men' who exercised in Anglo-Saxon days on behalf of the people the right to acclaim the new King. It included members of the Privy Council, and of both Houses of Parliament, as well as the Lord Mayor of London and other 'principal gentlemen of quality.'

There must have been fully four hundred members present awaiting, in unaccustomed silence, the arrival of the Speaker. As Big Ben began to toll one of the messengers entered the House from the Inner Lobby and, halting at the Bar, summoned us to our feet with the long-drawn cry of 'Speaker,' uttered with a solemnity which has no parallel in any assembly I know but, on this occasion, upon a slightly lower note than usual. The Speaker, without the Chaplain, but preceded as always by the Mace, entered and took his seat. Then taking the Bible in one hand he swore, as the first Commoner :

to be faithful and to bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Edward his heirs and successors according to law.

He next summoned the Front Bench, led by Mr. Baldwin, after whom came Mr. Chamberlain, Sir John Simon, and Mr. J. H. Thomas, as leaders of the three groups within the National Government. Each signed the roll, but did not shake hands with the Speaker as at the opening of a

new Parliament. Shortly afterwards the Front Opposition Bench were called, others followed, and it was eight o'clock before the House adjourned. I went across to the Upper Chamber to watch the proceedings there. It was dominated for the first time since Queen Victoria's death by one chair only, for there was no longer any place for the two chairs on the dais and the single chair, a step lower, for the Prince of Wales has become King and has no Consort. The Lord Chancellor, wearing white cuffs in sign of mourning, as did the clerks, took the oath first and was followed by some two hundred peers, including many Bishops.

I met and talked with many men and women in all walks of life that week: their attitude towards the late King reminded me of a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Timoleon*, who died in 133 B.C., which I have set at the head of this chapter.

The parallel to the last sentence is close, for the National Memorial to King George V has taken the form, like the Jubilee Fund, of a Trust for Youth.

But there was an uneasy feeling that the British Broadcasting Corporation had overstressed and overdramatised the sad events of the week, working, almost preying, upon popular emotions. The ticking of a clock, the tolling of a bell, were to the mind of many unduly theatrical and unsuited to the last moments of a man whose voice they had so often heard, and so perfectly, on five successive Christmas Days. One old lady asked me to get for her a copy of the last broadcast that she might frame it. I was able to gratify her wish, and I cannot do better than insert it here, for it was by his words on that occasion that he will live longest in the individual memory of his subjects:

The year that is passing—the twenty-fifth since my Accession—has been to me most memorable. It called forth a spontaneous offering of loyalty—may I say love?—which the Queen and I can

never forget. How could I fail to note in all the rejoicing not merely respect for the Throne, but a warm and generous remembrance of the man himself who, may God help him, has been placed upon it?

It is this personal link between me and my people which I value more than I can say. It binds us together in all our common joys and sorrows, as when this year you showed your happiness in the marriage of my son, and your sympathy in the death of my beloved sister. I feel this link now as I speak to you. For I am thinking not so much of the Empire itself as of the individual men, women and children who live within it, whether they are dwelling here at home or in some distant outpost of the Empire.

In Europe and many parts of the world anxieties surround us. It is good to think that our own family of peoples is at peace in itself and united in one desire to be at peace with other nations—the friend of all, the enemy of none. May the spirit of goodwill and mutual helpfulness grow and spread. Then it will bring not only the blessing of peace but a solution of the economic troubles that still beset us.

General mourning began on Wednesday (January 22) by direction of the Earl Marshal of England, to continue until after his late Majesty's funeral. No order was more widely or willingly obeyed. The late King's body lay in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Sandringham, guarded by gardeners and keepers who had been his servants on the estate. The coffin was of oak, from the same tree as that of his mother Queen Alexandra. Thousands passed through the church in token of respect and honour to the dead. *The Times* for January 23 carried the following headlines:

DANZIG NAZIS AND LEAGUE : *Sharp comments by Mr. Eden.*

OIL SANCTIONS : *Technical Report for League.*

FALL OF FRENCH CABINET : *Search for new Prime Minister.*

ITALIANS STILL ADVANCING IN ETHIOPIA.

But for us these, the present anxieties of others, seemed

less pressing for a time and we read rather of the tributes of foreign countries to our dead monarch and reports of the proclamation of the new King in his dominion in India and in the Colonies.

*The Times*, which surpassed even its own brave record in the dignified and vivid presentation of every aspect of the week's ceremonies, observed in a leading article on January 23 that it was right in the hour of bereavement to regard January 21 as 'being the day on which his Majesty began his happy reign.'

Those words, familiar to an older generation as part of the title of the Accession Service, are no longer to be found in modern Prayer Books. They date from 'the entry into this Kingdom of James I' and were to be found in every Royal Warrant until 1910, when for some unexplained reason they were omitted. The Royal Warrant prescribing January 21 as the anniversary of King Edward VIII's accession, and a later Royal Warrant prescribing December 11 as the anniversary of the accession of King George VI, were not even published in the *London Gazette*.

On Thursday, January 23, the body of the late King was brought from Sandringham to King's Cross Station in the same train conveying the King, Queen Mary and other members of the Royal Family. At three o'clock the Royal Coffin left the station, on a gun carriage drawn by 'F' Battery R.H.A.; upon it lay the Imperial Crown and, preceded by mounted police and flanked by Grenadier Guards, began the journey to Westminster Hall. Immediately behind it walked the King, accompanied by his three brothers and the Earl of Harewood and certain members of the Royal Household. This I did not see, for I was in my place in the Commons at two o'clock. The Speaker having read messages of condolence from certain foreign countries, called on the Prime Minister, who, leaving his seat and proceeding to the Bar of the

House, announced that he had a message from the King, signed by His Majesty's own hand. He delivered it to the Speaker to read. It ran as follows :

I am well assured that the House of Commons deeply mourns the death of My beloved Father. He devoted His life to the service of His people and to the upholding of Constitutional Government. He was ever actuated by His profound sense of duty. I am resolved to follow in the way He set before Me.

Then followed tributes, one and all finely worded and well delivered, from leaders of all parties, and the motion that a humble address be presented to His Majesty and a message of condolence to Her Majesty Queen Mary was passed *nemine contradicente*. The sitting was suspended for a time, and resumed at 3.30 P.M. At a quarter to four the Speaker led the House to Westminster Hall to await the arrival of the funeral cortège, and we took our places on the south side: on the north side were the Peers, marshalled by the Lord Chancellor. On the steps at the west end stood the choir from Westminster Abbey, supporting the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Dean, who joined the Earl Marshal and the Commissioner of Works outside the Great Door. Just after Big Ben had struck four the doors opened and the coffin entered, borne on the shoulders of eight guardsmen, flanked by the Pursuivants, Heralds, and Kings of Arms, in their tabards of azure, gules and gold, of all uniforms the most gorgeous, the most stately for men of all statures, and by far the oldest. The contrasts between the Bishops in their robes within and the gun carriage without, the armed forces of the Crown in their uniforms and the black-coated Lords and Commons, the solemn notes of the guns in Hyde Park and the perfect silence within the Hall offered, to those with eyes to see and ears to hear, no sense of anachronism. The people at large would fain see and hear such things oftener: the growth of industrialism, the steady creation of more drab places where men must live, as a consequence



of the disorderly growth of great cities, makes men more than ever hungry for such sights, and not only on formal occasions of sorrow or rejoicing. The service of prayer and thanksgiving was short: the Lords and Commons, many deeply moved, filed silently away, and the vigil of the Household Troops, Gentlemen at Arms and Yeomen of the Guard began.

As I returned home my memory recalled all the great ceremonials I had witnessed in the past: the Delhi Durbar of 1903, the Parade at Rawal Pindi before the late King in the spring of 1906, the great ceremonials at Paris during the Peace Conference at the Arc de Triomphe, and great gatherings in Berlin. I felt, as at the Jubilee, that the self-imposed, almost effortless, dignity and discipline of our British ceremonials, though it hid the marvellously efficient working of a great official machine, was none the less an expression of one side of our national character of which we have a right to be proud.

On Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday the late King's subjects passed in endless procession through Westminster Hall at the rate of 100,000 or so a day, with a short pause in the small hours. Some were school-boys with knapsacks who had come from distant suburbs, some were cripples; many bowed by instinct as they passed the bier; I joined the sad procession myself with several members and noted, once more, how strong was the desire of individual members of the great public to play some part, however humble, in a national tribute. Some ascribed the great crowds—for the queue extended over Lambeth Bridge—to the growing herd instinct of urban masses. I think they were wrong. This accounted, in part, for the unwieldy crowds which lined the streets for the funeral on Tuesday, but it played no part in sending men and women to Westminster Hall. Crowd psychology does not flourish in a silent procession which entails a wait of two or three hours in cold and wet

weather in the darkness of a winter night, but it was ministered to by the B.B.C. broadcasts, which harped almost unbearably upon the sadness and gloom which enshrouded all.

The funeral march from Westminster to Paddington on Tuesday, January 28, was watched by crowds without precedent which had begun to assemble before midnight. The procession left Westminster Hall at a quarter to ten to the tolling of Big Ben, of all sounds the most solemn: it reached Paddington half an hour late, at 12.30. There were moments of something like panic outside St. James's Palace and in Piccadilly and at the Marble Arch, where the line of troops was broken by the swaying pressure of vast crowds. People cried out in fear; many fainted; children were passed over the heads of crowds; many women who had tramped from barrier to barrier, unable to find a place whence they could see anything, were in tears.

But the keenest sympathy was reserved for King Edward himself, who, with his brothers and his late Majesty's closest servants, walked behind the gun carriage which carried his father's body from Westminster Hall to Paddington, where it was to be taken by train to Windsor for interment.<sup>1</sup>

Many if not most Englishmen felt that King George's death marked the end of an epoch: monarchy is impersonal, but not the monarch. Some welcomed the prospect of a change, all were prepared for it; the shock of the late King's death—and it was a real shock to many millions—was abated by the quiet, almost joyful, confidence that his successor, still regarded by most men and nearly all women as a stripling, was fully trained and ready to take his place on the Throne. ‘*Primo avulso non deficit*

<sup>1</sup> The best account of King George's illness and death, of the lying-in-state and the funeral, and of the tributes which poured in from many lands, is that published by *The Times* under the title of *Hail and Farewell*.

*alter, aureus* '—the Virgilian tag leapt to my lips—' when one (Golden Bough) has been torn away there is not lacking yet another, also of gold.'

Long days of Court mourning followed, and a shorter period of public mourning prescribed by custom, which dies hard. There is, in fact, no Biblical authority and no Christian basis for mourning. Regarded as a customary outward sign of grief it originated in the theory that those so attired were unclean because they had handled or helped to convey a corpse to the grave. I know of no detailed study of the growth of the custom but, in its modern manifestations, now fortunately falling into desuetude, it seems no older than the eighteenth and to have reached its climax in the nineteenth century. I prefer the soldierly custom which so often consoled me in India, whereby the Regimental Band, which had played the Dead March to the graveside, struck up a merry tune on the return journey and maintained it until the Burial Party had been dismissed. It did us all good and was consistent with the saying of Our Lord (to be found in three of the four Gospels), 'God is not God of the dead but God of the living.'

## CHAPTER X

FEBRUARY 1936

Forasmuch as the great and Almighty God hath given unto mankind above all living creatures, such an heart and desire, that every man desireth to join friendship with other, to love and to be loved, also to give and receive mutual benefits ; it is therefore the duty of all men according to their power, to maintain and increase this desire in every man, with well deserving to all men, and especially to show this good affection to such, as being moved with this desire, come unto them from far countries.

. . . For the God of Heaven and earth, greatly providing for mankind, would not that all things should be found in one region, to the end that one should have need of another ; that by this means Friendship might be established among all men, and every one seek to gratify all.

*Extract from letters missive, which the right noble king Edward the Sixth sent to the Kings, Princes and other Potentates inhabiting the North Eastern parts of the world, toward the mighty Empire of Cathay at such time as Sir Hugh Willoughby, knight, and Richard Chancellor, with their company attempted their voyage thither in the year of Christ 1553.*

*Hakluyt's Voyages, vol. i.*

I SPENT a fortnight of February abroad, in Germany and Italy. My first visit to Germany after Herr Hitler's accession to power was in May 1934, and in the June issue of *The English Review* I placed on record the view which I had formed after a long personal interview with him. I described Herr Hitler as capable of rising to great heights, but to-day reserving his strength and authority for the tasks of the near future, destined to become in Germany a venerable and revered figure. That

was not the general view when I wrote : it was indeed the very antithesis of the trend of all current and most expert opinion. England alone, I added, could exercise, if she displayed sympathy, a moderating and perhaps a decisive influence.

My second visit to Germany was in June–July 1934. I had arrived there on June 30, the day of the *Verklärung* at Munich. Nothing that I saw or heard induced me to modify my earlier opinions.

My first visit to Italy and to Signor Mussolini was in September 1935 and, on my return, I wrote to *The Times* opposing à outrance the policy of ‘ economic sanctions ’ on the ground that, if applied, they would as surely lead to a European war as would the closing of the Suez Canal—an act which would itself be a breach of international law. I neither applauded nor condemned Italian policy. I held, like Sir Robert Morier in 1871 (January 16), that

In judging of a great international contest [he referred to the Franco-Prussian war] we not only have no right, but we are guilty of a great wrong, in judging either side by an ideal code which has never been practically established.

Since my first visit events had taken the course I had anticipated : tension was still acute, for sanctions had been in force since October and there was still talk of extending them.

The ship that took me across the Channel was almost empty. The young steward on duty in the saloon told me something of his life-history. Champion boxer of a home county, he was nigh killed when matched at Liverpool against a young man from the North of England—who could be knocked out by nothing short of a pole-axe. He had been obliged to give up boxing. Passengers did not like to be served by a man with a black eye and a thick ear, however honourable such scars ; but he stuck to his physical training, and it made a difference to his life. A steward on a Channel steamer lived three lives,

of about equal length—one on board, the second in the town where he made his home, and the third on the opposite side of the Channel, where he had to find his own amusements. He talked some French and had a girl friend in both the French ports he visited. His father had served in the Navy and, like him, favoured compulsory military service for everyone, with public works for ‘conchie’s’ and unfit. He would have joined the Navy himself but for the very long period of service required. The Army in this respect was even worse. They would enlist a band-boy at fifteen and make him sign for twelve years, starting from his eighteenth birthday, and it cost at least £30 or £40 to buy a boy out.

I had some conversation with two passengers whom I had met on the boat train. One was a young Austrian, a dispensing chemist who had made friends with an American party, one of whom had paid his fare to London and back. He showed me her photograph. His ambition was to emigrate to America, and marry her, as she desired, but the prospect of a permit even for an active, well-bred, educated citizen, such as he, was small. He was tired of the narrowness of life in Austria; it was not easy for the inhabitants of a buffer State to be happy. He enjoyed England, but restaurant food was dear, though meat and bread, eggs and sugar, tea and coffee were cheaper. He would not care to live in cities so dirty and noisy as ours. ‘America,’ I said, ‘may be noisier.’ ‘I shall not notice it if I see her there,’ he replied. He was a Catholic, but disliked Italian policy: he was of German stock, but not a Nazi. He wanted to be and to remain an Austrian, but it was difficult. We, the victors of Versailles, had smashed up Europe and made Czechoslovakia out of the debris. Of German wrongs there he spoke as hotly as, nearly two years later, I heard Professor Arnold Toynbee speak.

My other travelling companion was a young Frenchman

returning for the third time from a visit to friends in Scotland. He had never spent more than a few hours in London: he had always reached Victoria by an evening train and taken the night train to Edinburgh. His outlook on the British people was in consequence strangely different from the Austrian's. He knew Edinburgh and rural Scotland, but not during the holiday season, and his opinions were those formed by contact with his friends, and the friends of his friends, in Kirkcudbrightshire and the Trossachs, where he had also stayed. His English, like his outlook, was that of Edinburgh. He marvelled at our detachment from party politics. He was destined for the French Colonial Service and, unlike most of our young Colonial Civil Servants, had been well grounded before he left College in the principles of Colonial Government. He could not understand how our colonial system, if it could be so called, could be expected to work. The French were a democratic nation, but they had not made the mistake of trying to apply it to their Dependencies. As a result they had had far less trouble than we had experienced since 1920. The French held, as he thought we should hold, that they had as good a right to be in Cochin China or in W. Africa, in Morocco or in Pondichery, as anyone there except, perhaps, the aboriginal inhabitants, who were not and never would be rulers.

Confronted by the alternative of good government or self-government the French chose the former, except in Syria, where events seemed likely to prove too strong for them, thanks to our failure to keep the mandate in Iraq. We had jockeyed the French out of Mosul, and then given it to the Arabs of Baghdad, who had no shadow of claim to it, for Mosul had never been under Baghdad and was not really an Arab city. He thought that we had unduly exalted the principle of self-government and we should pay dearly for it one day. It meant giving power to corrupt millionaires and upstart tyrants,

simply because they lived on the spot and, generally, talked the local language.

He feared for our future: France needed Britain, but not so much, perhaps, as Britain needed France, for France could always, if need be, join hands with Italy and Germany and leave us friendless and isolated, burdened by possessions wholly disproportionate to our will to rule, if not to our strength.

The talk turned to 'Youth Movements': he belittled them—one and all. A fallacy underlay all attempts to regiment, or to find expression in 'movements' for, the view of young people from 18 to 23. These were years of immaturity, of relative dependence on others. Youths fell a ready victim to unreality and to sophistries, and it was not fair to encourage them at that age to commit themselves to views—religious, social or political—which might hamper them in after life. French youths might be fervent adherents of the Croix de Feu, or of Russia, but they did not write books about 'disillusioned youth' or boast that 'We did not (or will not) fight.' They were not given to 'youth movements'; they grew up quicker and, he thought, enjoyed life more than our young men. A year spent in the Army was worth two years in College. His father, he said, was an owner of vineyards, one uncle a priest and one a colonel in the Army: all had been wounded in the Great War. He was a practising Catholic, but followed his priestly uncle in eschewing politics. He had no fear of Communism, for the French Communist would not allow French Colonies to be ill-governed, still less abandoned. French Socialists were Imperialists, believers in strong armies and big Air Forces—quite a different breed from ours.

'I am not sure that you are right there,' I observed: it is dangerous for foreigners to assume that our politicians in opposition mean precisely what they are made to say in headlines. 'Socialist' and 'Labour' are not interchangeable adjectives, and the electors who support either



one or the other differ little so far as external policy is concerned from those who support Conservative or Liberal candidates. All parties find their main support among artisans and weekly wage-earners.

He hoped to be posted to Senegal: there was scope for adventure there, and direct administration on progressive lines. His second choice was Madagascar, his third Annam. He had been to Morocco and Algeria: the administration was too much like France to attract him greatly.

We crossed Paris together and he introduced me over breakfast to some French officers, one of whom had been at the Lycée with him. They gave me the impression, which the newspapers confirmed, of a growing feeling of resentment against sanctions which was scarcely, if at all, reflected in the English newspapers. This resentment was beginning to be focussed against us, as the leading advocates of sanctions.

In one of the main streets of Paris I saw a great hoarding above a shop window:

ASSEZ DE RUINES  
ASSEZ DE CHÔMAGE  
ASSEZ DE MISÈRE  
À BAS LES SANCTIONS.

I believe that represented the view of the mass of French voters of both wings.

From Turin onwards the train was overcrowded, for services had been reduced on non-electrified lines in order to save coal. The resultant discomfort irritated all classes, but did not interfere with hostilities in Ethiopia. Nowhere did I meet with anything but courtesy: nor did I find Italians reluctant to discuss politics with an Englishman. On the contrary, they expressed their opinions, which were not invariably those of the newspapers, in the presence of total strangers, with surprising freedom.

Many foreign newspapers were freely on sale, and in the Italian papers I found adequate summaries of the British attitude towards Italy, and no lack of news. The items were much the same as in our papers, but the emphasis was different. Prominence was given to riots in Cairo, to unrest in Palestine and disturbances in Syria. The bitter cry of British settlers in Kenya against official misrule, and recent native revolts in Rhodesia, were not overlooked. The news of the notable victories of General Graziani was contrasted with British assertions, made a few days earlier, that no progress was possible.

*Punch's* cartoons of an ice-cream merchant fighting a nigger minstrel, and of Mussolini swathed in barbed wire, will not soon be forgotten, or forgiven, but what principally excited resentment was the attempt of successive Foreign Secretaries to distinguish between Signor Mussolini and the Italian people. We tried it with Lenin and later with Mussolini (in 1923) and failed. We tried it again with Herr Hitler and failed. Mussolini will remain at the helm till the hand of death removes him; he is in the prime of life and—notwithstanding club rumours—in perfect bodily and mental health.

Sanctions were hurting Italy; they were also hurting France and Great Britain, but, as the schoolboy said to the headmaster, 'not in the same place.' Food prices had not risen more than in England. Petrol was dearer, taxation having been increased in order to discourage consumption. Building was slowing down owing to shortage of timber. Apart from food, prices had risen 10 per cent. or even 15 per cent., but that was all. German coal had taken the place of British coal. We shall not readily recover this market; repeated strikes and threats of strikes, and now 'sanctions,' had taught Italians a lesson; German and Austrian goods had replaced British goods and the public and shopkeepers alike vowed that the change was permanent. The labels on British goods were being removed, stocks would not

be renewed. They did not feel so strongly about France, but of us they felt, like the Psalmist, 'If it had been an enemy that had done me this dishonour then I could have borne it, but it was my own familiar friend whom I trusted.'

Trade prohibitions had given a renewed fillip to the demand for economic self-sufficiency. Coal was being mined in Sardinia and Istria, and nickel in Piedmont; iron-ore was being brought in greater quantity from Elba. Beet was being grown for alcohol, for use in lieu of petrol as in France, and a plant to produce oil from coal was being erected. A substitute for wool was being made from casein, and for jute from broom; the cellulose industry, already well established, was active in other directions. From these developments we, who depend more than any other nation on international trade, were bound to suffer.

Signor Mussolini was good enough again to receive me at the Palazzo Venezia. He looked tired but robust. He spoke of the military position in Ethiopia with pride and confidence. The troops were in the best of spirits; tropical diseases had not made their appearance, the invalidity was abnormally low. He had never expected a short campaign; he had always spoken of military operations lasting over two or more years.

I asked him whether the Hoare-Laval proposals, had they been approved, would have been regarded as a suitable basis for negotiation.

'Yes,' he said, 'I had already drafted a cautious formula of acceptance as a basis of negotiation. The Council of Ministers, which would have been asked to approve it, was sitting when the news came that you gentlemen in London, who had praised Sir Samuel Hoare so highly in September, had dismissed him with ignominy on December 19. As a direct result of your action much Ethiopian and some Italian blood has been needlessly shed, and more treasure must be spent. You have prolonged

the war: a great responsibility lies on you, for the proposals had the collective approval of the French and British Cabinets before they reached me.

'I have repeatedly assured the British Government,' he continued in response to a direct question, 'that we harbour no designs against any British interest in Africa. The development of our interests in Ethiopia should create not divergent, but common, interests with Great Britain. That assumption underlay every diplomatic discussion since 1884. What else was involved by the Treaty of 1906, creating spheres of interest, or of 1925, when you handed over Jubaland to us?'

This claim seemed to me on reflection to be well founded. If Italy assumes heavy liabilities East of Suez she must help us in all circumstances to keep open the Canal. She was, I understood, ready to undertake not to follow the example of France by raising a great black army for service overseas. In such matters the Italians have a different standard from Frenchmen.

Signor Mussolini referred with pride to the loyalty and courage of the local troops under Italian officers, who had proved by their fiery trial that they knew as well as British, French or German officers how to evoke and maintain loyalty. Italy was ready, he said, to collaborate in executing a common policy in Africa in the interests of all the world.

'Pietists and quietists, pacifists and their allies,' said Signor Mussolini, 'may continue to cherish their belief in and hope for a world in which there is no struggle, in which the least competent will be able to keep the progressive elements in the world within the territorial limits set at a given moment by the accidents of history. Much has happened since 1919. Fascism has arisen, and also Communism: new nations are being born and new needs created. The old boundaries regarded only the need for land on which to grow corn and pasture for cattle: modern nations need much else.'

‘Is it not time that the British people realised that their present attitude implicitly condemns all that is greatest in their history? Are you really ashamed to have seized the great areas you hold as beneficiaries, but also as trustees for the inhabitants and the world at large? Do you really believe that you should, in the past, have left the savage world to its own devices, in the New World, in the Antipodes, Africa and Asia?’

‘Have your activities for the last three hundred years been criminal adventures in your eyes? Are not we Italians, by imitating you, paying you the highest compliment? Was Cecil Rhodes a criminal? Was Gordon’s mission to the Sudan a delusion?’

‘Is there anything immoral in enabling a great race to expand its borders and in so doing to free millions from the foulest servitude ever imposed by man on man? To the inhabitants of the non-Amharic areas, and to the Italian troops, this is a war of liberation; a war against misery and slavery.’ I had heard the same from three British war correspondents fresh from Addis Ababa and Eritrea a few days earlier.

I asked Signor Mussolini whether trade would return to its old channels when League committees reverted to the task of peacemaking, so rudely disturbed by the action of the two remaining Parliamentary democracies of Europe, and when sanctions ceased to operate.

‘No,’ the Duce said. ‘That cannot be: we have spent and are spending too much in creating fresh channels to take the place of those that you have taken the lead in diverting. We cannot abandon the mines we are opening, the great plants we are erecting, the long-term contracts we are making.’

‘We have relied, more than most countries, on the normal avenues of international trade: these, once choked, cannot quickly be opened. Public opinion has been aroused. We shall not soon forget the language used by your statesmen. You have turned a colonial war

into what may yet be a world-wide disaster. Where is the Stresa front now? We cannot forget the blood and treasure we poured out in the Great War, nor put away from us the remembrance of 670,000 dead. Have you so soon forgotten?'

Signor Mussolini, like Herr Hitler, served in the ranks in the Great War, and as he bade me goodbye I became aware that his mind, like mine, had for a moment gone back twenty years, to the heights of human courage and the depths of human misery that English and Italians reached in a common cause in the winter of 1916.

Sanctions had failed: irreparable damage was being done, not the least being the apparent attempt on our part to join hands with the Soviet Government, through its alliance with France, in a vain attempt to save not peace, but the League. I left Rome with a heavy heart.

## CHAPTER XI

MARCH 1936

There is no Trade nor Employment for the People ; and yet the Land is under peopled ; Taxes have been many and great ; Trade in general doth lamentably decay : . . . the Expence of foreign Commodities hath of late been too great ; much of our Plate, had it remain'd money, would have better served Trade ; too many matters have been regulated by Laws, which Nature, long Custom, and General Consent, ought only to have governed ; the Slaughter and Destruction of Men by the late (Civil) Wars have been great. . . .

SIR WILLIAM PETTY. *Political Arithmetick* (1690).

I WENT north this month for a few days to address a week-end 'Political School' in Northumberland and, incidentally, to see and hear for myself what changes had taken place since my first visit just over two years ago. I took a corner seat in a third-class compartment in the night train and made myself comfortable. The other three corners were occupied by reserved and apparently taciturn figures. It was bitterly cold outside and all three were smoking strong tobacco. I was the only one to have hired a blanket, but I had no overcoat ; two were collarless, each wearing instead a spotless white silk scarf. I tried to guess what sort of people they were, and to while away a long journey opened up on the oldest and likeliest :

'Are you going all the way ?'

He nodded.

'To Edinburgh ?'

He nodded again.

'Newcastle's far enough for me.'

'It's a bad place to reach on a Sunday morning.'

‘ You know it ? ’

‘ I did know it when I was going to sea. ’

‘ Engine-room ? ’

‘ Aye. ’

‘ You’ve been East ? ’

‘ Aye—and West too—most everywhere. ’

The ice was broken and he began to tell of ports he knew and of many cargoes. He had been twenty years afloat and was now in a shore job at a power station. My interest in his conversation seemed to please him and before we passed Peterborough we had surveyed half the world. He had no complaints against life: he had been lucky, and steady: he took the rough with the smooth. His ship had been sunk by a submarine in the Mediterranean and the crew had taken to the boats. Torpedoes were nasty things from the point of view of the engine-room staff: he had a son in the Navy—now serving in a submarine, he added laughingly. It was the way of the world and no one had found a better. It was a good thing for every family to have one or two sons in the service of the Crown. They were steadier than those who went into factories and in his experience did better.

The remark aroused a youth in the corner. ‘ Can a man get a decent job when he leaves the Army—that’s what I want to know ? ’ he asked, almost truculently.

‘ There’s some as can and some as can’t,’ replied the engineer. ‘ There’s generally room for steady hands on sea-going ships. ’

‘ That’s no good to me,’ replied the youth. ‘ I’m married, I am ; I can’t chuck the wife and kids and go round the world for a living. ’

‘ Are you in the Army ? ’ I asked.

‘ Yes—six weeks to go for my seven ’ (years). ‘ I’m just back from India—been “ twisted ” there—told me I was on for six and kept the extra year for an everlasting emergency. ’

‘ I was in Pindi myself in 1902,’ I observed.



‘ Gosh, that was before I was born, but it’s just the same I expect, same old barracks and same old sun. Talk about sun-worship! It’s something to be afraid of, out there! ’

The engineer settled down to listen. I had enough experience in common with the soldier to encourage him to roam almost as widely as the engineer. India had its joys for him as well as its miseries: the trouble was that he had a wife and children. The Army abroad was no place for a married man and he had left her at home. He was returning to York for discharge. His home was in Leicester. He had tried for the Army Vocational Centre at Aldershot, but there were no vacancies. He did not know what to do in civil life. No Trade Union wanted him: he did not want to be a telephone line man. There was no chance of bettering himself there. The Departmental officials did not go all out to train ex-soldiers to fit the jobs: it was sink or swim, take it or leave it. He had a young brother who had joined the P.O. the year he joined the Army. He could never hope to get level with him on pay or pension, for Army service did not count for pension in the Post Office. He set me thinking on lines which may, I hope, one day bear fruit. I knew that recruiting for the Regular Army was bad, and getting worse: his conversation stimulated me to make further inquiries.

He left the carriage at York and I stretched myself out to sleep till Newcastle, where I was awakened by a porter and ejected at 5.30 A.M. I went to the waiting-room and slept on in a seat till seven o’clock, when, after a wash and a shave, I went out into the wind-swept streets to the Cathedral to early service.

Then to breakfast at a hotel. I ordered a kipper, thinking myself near enough to the source of supply to be likely to get the real article. I was wrong; it was not smoked but dyed, and the difference is as great as between ‘cheese, sir, just cheese,’ and a genuine Cheddar or

Wensleydale or Cheshire cheese. In fact, dyed kippers are notoriously indigestible. But that does not prevent short-sighted merchants from selling them with the tacit connivance of all concerned, including the Ministry of Health and the Herring Board. A car came for me soon after breakfast and I was soon enjoying the hospitality of those in charge of the School.

When it was my turn to lecture I contended that responsible persons, in every walk of life, should distinguish when necessary and possible between the day-to-day needs of the average man and his daily discontents. Oftener than not he does not know what can be done: his discontent is often focussed upon the wrong object. The immediate cause of a strike, for example, is often trifling and unreasonable: it is merely a symptom of discontent, the true cause of which the men, and sometimes even their leaders, do not rightly discern.

We were all apt to concentrate upon higher wages, better and more costly social services. We had scarcely begun to try to enable the weekly wage-earner to get better value for his wages.

I talked next day with many unemployed men of all ages and a few women. Few, if any, were politically minded: they were indeed too intelligent to associate any particular party label with economic salvation—an attitude of mind of little more validity than the corresponding tenets in the religious sphere. Some had been South. Few of them had enjoyed the experience. The people in the South were not as a rule friendly: literally and figuratively they spoke a different tongue. The pay was bad—for men who had to live in lodgings and wanted to send something home. The local girls would seldom walk out with them—a very sore point—the true *mal du pays*. The work was new, and often onerous: on the Kent coalfields the methods were new and strange. They were unwelcome as lodgers, but they had a horror of casual wards and common lodging houses; none of them

had ever seen or heard of a municipal hostel, or even one run on decent lines under private enterprise.

Some might have joined the Army or Navy, but it seems never to have been pressed on them at 'the Labour' and their mothers often objected. (The influence of women is very great, and is almost invariably against any adventurous course.) For the most part they were acquiescent, first with a dumb fortitude, later with a dull indifference. As the months of idleness passed they sank to and accepted a lower level of existence, unless home influences were strong enough to withstand the strain.

Not all those in regular employment were happy. One youth, a machinist, confided to me his ambition to enlist on his eighteenth birthday—three months hence, though his mother stood in the way. He was getting 24s. 6d. a week, and paid his mother 16s. He would get 14s. a week in the Army and all found, and send his mother half. He was big enough to enter the Foot Guards; thence he would enter the Metropolitan Police. But his sister who lived at home was just getting married, and if he left home his mother would have to keep house for a lodger or two, and it would break his heart. He had £10 in the Savings Bank, and would give it to her to help to make up the difference; and his sister and married brother would go on helping a bit, but it would not be enough. His brother's employment was with a great firm, but precarious: 'they stand a man off if his machine stops for half a day—competition for contracts is so severe.' For himself, he knew that he was almost certain to be thrown out at twenty-one. 'After twenty-one a man becomes entitled to a man's wage—so they turn them off and take on boys. It's no good complaining—Government does it just the same at Enfield and Woolwich, they say.' The work did not suit him: he longed for the hills and open air and he spent week-ends on the Fells in camp. He hated the smell of sperm oil, and the asthmatic coughs of his mates, and their fear of open windows filled him

with dread. His feelings were those of Lamentations (chap. iii):

He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old. He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy.

But for his dependent mother he would enlist or emigrate, or go on a farm; but filial duty was stronger than ambition. 'She has brought us all up—father died when I was two—and I must stand by her.'

An older man sat on a seat at Tynemouth gazing out to sea with sad eyes. 'No ships want a man of my age these days,' he said. 'No chance for me, though I am only forty-five, and as strong as the best. I tell you what's wrong with the world: not us—not you—not machines—not the war even—it's the money machine that's gone wrong. Them Americans wrecked it, and them financiers. Kreuger and Hatry and all that lot with their titled friends and tame professors—they frightened everyone off, and killed all confidence. Put money right and other things will come right.' 'Haltwhistle and Wilton Park?' I asked. 'Perhaps not them,' he said, 'they're too far gone. Nothing to hope for there. But if anything is to be done, it must be in a hurry, mister. We're all going downhill hereabouts and there'll be nothing worth saving in a few years. Look at my own boys'—and his voice became deep and stern; 'sixteen, eighteen and twenty. At sixteen an errand boy for two years: at eighteen the sack and nothing to do. At twenty the same and wants to do nothing.' 'The Army?' I queried. 'He would come back in seven years with no better chance—I offered it him but he wouldn't take it.' I argued the case hotly and he promised to look into it again. I took him to the Post Office to get recruiting pamphlets—they had none, but I took his address and posted him some copies. 'The happy ones is those that has no wife and no children,' he concluded. 'Less money but no cares.'

Before I left the town I went to the cheapest seats in the cinema. The best seats were empty: the cheapest full. The level of dress poorer than in the South and few cigarettes in evidence, but there was cheerfulness and gaiety—the young women saw to that. Statistically young females are classified as gainfully employed or not, according to their occupation, but sociologically they are almost all ‘gainfully employed’ in keeping themselves and some young men from decay.

Things were certainly far better than in 1934: the shipyards were looking up, the workshops were taking on men. Few, if any, skilled men were unemployed. The Ministry of Labour Vocational Training Centre at Wallsend was finding no difficulty in placing almost every youth who did his full six months’ training there. The coalmines were employing more men. The cuts in unemployment benefit had been restored: the doctors reported that schoolchildren were as fit in Northumberland and Durham as anywhere in England, and they were getting free milk and in many places free food.

What more could be done? Mill says somewhere that ‘the disease from which governments suffer and from which they eventually expire is routine—they perish from the immutability of their maxims.’ Not only governments but nations may die thus, quietly, without flowers or even a revolution, simply because they have not had the courage, before it was too late, to change their habits. The worst of Unemployment and Transitional Benefit is that it masks the real tragedy, the real deterioration, both from onlookers and from the victims themselves.

Everyone qualified to speak praises the work of the Ministry of Labour and its officials in this connection: so far as they have failed, it is because the attempt has been made to transfer individuals, or groups, from Whitehaven, for example, to Kent. The older miners are as hard to move and as attached to their homes as cats.

Many Cumberland miners thus transferred walked back from Dover sooner than remain in strange surroundings, though in many cases they would have done well on the land. The younger men and women are less intractable.

The County Councils, elected bodies, preoccupied with heavy administration work generally admirably performed, cannot arouse public opinion or initiate new developments. A National Government should look to National figures in each county to give effect to it. Such are the Lord-Lieutenants: they stand, with few exceptions, above party. They could place themselves at the head of organisations that would harness charity, mobilise personal service and sustain activities which only too often wilt for lack of sunshine. In close co-operation with local bodies they could initiate movements which, once fully launched, could be included within the scope of existing official bodies.

The agricultural industry on both coasts is at a low level; though regular employment on the land is slightly on the increase, casual labour has also tended to fall, largely because long-period engagements of men are more common than in the South. There are few small-holders, and no active steps are being taken under governmental auspices to develop land settlement, though there are fewer men employed on the land now than in 1850, and machinery has had almost no effect upon the volume of employment on farms. Unofficial attempts to develop small-holdings now being made have met with a degree of success that augurs well for the movement, if actively encouraged by Government.

On the other hand, there has been a steady increase of expenditure by County Councils, despite a stationary or falling population, and a falling rateable value, due in part to the shrinkage of railway traffic which was reflected in assessments. Trading services soon tend to lose money when business is bad, and even municipal water services are often run at a loss when large commercial users drop

out. In one northern county the total rate fund expenditure increased by over 50 per cent. between 1919 and 1930, of which over half was met by Exchequer grants, and rates increased in about the same proportion. The incidence of local taxation is considerably higher in the North than in the South; this fact gives impetus to the southward movement of fairly well-to-do people, draining the counties of a very valuable social element, of a type, too, that survived far longer in effective and vigorous life in the North than in the South. There were until quite recently many men of good breeding and real status who could and did for preference talk the county dialect, as well as 'common English,' in their own locality without conveying the slightest hint of patronage.

Their place has been taken for practical purposes by large and increasing official staffs. Large sums have been borrowed and are still being spent on roads for tourist traffic, past rows of hovels which are a national disgrace. Half the money spent on making racing tracks in the past ten years would have sufficed, if capitalised, to finance the most urgent local housing schemes. Local administration is an inextricable tangle, in which authorities, numbered in some counties by many scores, spend a vast amount of energy in fighting each other, and wrangling with Whitehall for grants. There are too many Urban Districts, too many Boroughs, perhaps even too many Counties. Nowhere is the case for larger units stronger on grounds of economy<sup>1</sup> and of common interests. The broad issues of Local Government have yet to be faced, though a Royal Commission on Tyneside administration is now sitting. The matter is more urgent in the North than in the South because population and rateable value are alike declining.

Protection has, as yet, done little good to the North-

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland is an honourable exception, with a debt of £1 5s. 2d. per head in 1932, almost the lowest in England, and Cumberland has been foremost in its attempts to create efficient local units.

East and North-West coastal districts, for the falling off of traffic with Ireland and the Continent has not, as yet, been counterbalanced as in the South by any increase of internal trade. Individual initiative has been sapped here, as elsewhere, by restrictive regulations, the cumulative effect of which is serious. Why keep pigs for home consumption when it is a crime to kill one without a costly licence and a very expensive instrument? Why go to the expense of starting to keep them when at any moment a man may be prosecuted under some obscure regulation for causing a nuisance and convicted, not because he has done so, but because he has contravened a rule? The schools in the North are in general more destitute even than those in the South from any sort of 'agricultural bias.' Thousands of children sit on benches till they are fourteen, engaged in purely clerical learning. 'Education' means a medicine you take sitting in a school. The benches are not better designed than the curriculum—the one cramping the body as the other does the mind. Many youths when they leave are already unemployable—no more able than their teachers to grow vegetables or tend animals. Not one in a thousand has seen a cow milked, not one in a hundred has fed a hen. They sometimes learn to do so, later, but not till they have been at a loose end for three or four years, and have deteriorated bodily and mentally. Gone is the keenness of youth—they have been taught to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest—books.

Yet the tending of animals and the growing of food crops are probably of all forms of work the most suited for adolescents, and one to which they could be harnessed at least cost, though agriculture will never in the North employ as many persons as in the South: the quality of the land will not allow it, but food production can, and should, bulk much more largely in schemes of education. These will succeed only if they are under the Ministry of Agriculture and not under the Board of Education,



just as the Occupational and Training Centres, because they are run by the Ministry of Labour, have been successful, thanks to the close touch maintained with industry.

The unmistakable determination of the man in the street to dissociate himself from demonstrations against Germany has startled many observers. I am not concerned here to discuss the rights and wrongs of the disputants, but only the attitude of mind of some scores of men in all walks of life with whom I have talked in half a dozen different counties during the past fortnight. They were, without exception, in favour of making a fresh start: they viewed the passing of the Treaty of Versailles without alarm, the demise of the Locarno spirit without regret, for the fact that it imposed obligations on us came to most of them as a surprise.

A Member of Parliament's first duty, once he is elected, is to represent his constituents; the second duty, if he is a supporter of the Government of the day, is to justify its ways to his constituents. As he listens to speeches from the front bench, and as he reads his daily paper, he has to picture himself explaining the policy of the moment from a public platform. What arguments can he use, what phrases can he employ, to carry his audience with him? Rearmament, reasonable tariffs, mining royalties, tithe reform, national roads and shipping subsidies offer little difficulty: the facts are there. Raising the school age is harder, for sixty years of compulsory education have failed to convince those who must send their children to school till fourteen that 'another little year won't do them any harm': there are no 'facts' which will serve the speaker's purpose.

But what if a Member of Parliament is asked to-day to make recruiting speeches to help man the armed forces of the Crown—now misnamed 'defence services'? 'What's up?' says the young man at the back of the hall.

'Is anyone wanting to attack us?' It is not enough to reply, as one Minister replied on March 13, 'We must be mighty in order that right may prevail.' An appeal to join the Army to defend the League and Collective Security will be received in stony silence, and someone in the hall will say, 'Whereabouts?' The speaker has recourse to incantations and proclaims his belief in 'collective security.' A lady in the front row asks him whether in his opinion China would help us against Japan, and whether the Czechoslovaks and Poles and Russians would help us against Italy. The member tries to imagine what Mr. Anthony Eden would say in such circumstances, and says it, but soon finds his audience to be less respectful than the House of Commons.

But what if a Member of Parliament is asked to-day to explain the foreign policy of the Locarno Four? I sought the guidance at this point of a Spaniard of distinction—my friend and sometimes my mentor, a scholar and a man of letters of repute in three countries, whose acquaintance with the past does not disqualify him from a lively interest in the problems of the present day. He loves and knows England, which he has made his home. He had that evening returned from lecturing at the Sorbonne, and had dined and lunched with a French Cabinet Minister, several professors, a journalist of repute, and a distinguished politician.

'It seems to me,' said I, 'that we have made every possible mistake in handling Germany these many years. We never whole-heartedly backed Stresemann, we humiliated Brüning. We laughed Hitler to scorn.'

'My French friends,' was the reply, 'would not disagree with you. But they might remind you, perhaps with acerbity, that Great Britain must bear a large share of responsibility. They are well aware that the French Governments, which are not necessarily France, have missed great opportunities in the past, and particularly

point to Hitler's offer of equality of armaments on the basis of 300,000 men—an excellent offer, for the population of Germany will soon be twice that of France, another fact which sooner or later will make your intervention in Europe necessary to a far greater extent than is at present dreamt of, unless you wish to see Western Europe, opposite your shores, entirely dominated by Germany. Instead of accepting this parity, official policy continued to be conducted as if you still had a disarmed Germany in the midst of a Europe bristling with armaments. The real quarrel, or at least discreet complaint, of some of my friends is that in the past you have disorganised French opinion by blowing hot and cold alternately.'

'Will the French press for sanctions immediately?' I asked. 'They have not availed in the case of Italy to stop the war, or even to shorten it. They have caused intense bitterness in France and in Italy, which has found in them a fresh source of national unity.'

'Temperamentally France is not inclined to sanctions, and the French, being soldiers by instinct, know that there is only one form of effective sanction, and that is war; and that, in any case, what begins as sanctions ends in war very shortly if these are effective. My own feeling is that "sanctions" is becoming a polite word for war, and, as such, has the advantage of satisfying the tender conscience of the irresponsible supporters of the League while satisfying their very war-like righteousness.'

'What will they do, then? Accept Hitler's proposals?'

'Yes, most certainly—as a basis of discussion. Hitler says he desires world peace: that is an advance; it was not always foremost in his mind. He has sketched the outlines of an agreement: he shall have our co-operation in working out details. But, say the left wing, we will hold him to his word—*hic Rhodus, hic salta*. It shall be a voluntary agreement in the fullest sense of the word.

Other Powers, less immediately concerned, can come in later and shall make their own agreements with Germany whether at Geneva or elsewhere ; but we will make sure that this, the latest Treaty, is also the one that shall be a charter of liberty for Germany *and* France.'

'What about England?' I asked. 'Where do we come in?'

'A composite French reply would be somewhat in these terms: We have both sinned ; we have respected your instincts even if some of us could not understand your views. We ask this of British statesmen, and of all who can influence British opinion, that you should cease to harp upon our past errors, for every one of which you, did you but know it, were in some measure jointly responsible. Cease to discourage those of us who wish to come to an understanding with Germany by urging isolation, on the one hand, or, on the other, a "League policy," which would fail because it would be too extensive in its scope to be of value.

'Face the facts and face Hitler. It is true that your armed force on land is small ; but your prestige is great. Tell him that he is now being put to the test: does he wish to promote the interests of peace in Europe? If so, let him prove it by deeds and on parchment. Having done so, you must be his guarantors, unreservedly undertaking to use the whole force behind you if he abates a jot or a tittle from his new covenant. He has likened Germany to a hedgehog, which requires spines for its defence. The parable is inept, since this little animal is a born isolationist, rolling himself incontinently into a ball if touched however lightly, and thus remaining, if prodded from time to time, till his reflexes cease to act by inanition.'

I agree that the simile was unfortunate and proves that Hitler is not La Fontaine and has not studied Pavlov. That is a pity, for La Fontaine is one of the greatest literary geniuses on a minor scale of all time, whilst

Pavlov was a secluded scientist. He should be remembered in Germany for the abuse he heaped on the U.S.S.R., which, be it said to its honour, replied by heaping honours and distinction on him.

‘It occurs to me,’ continued Professor Pastor, ‘that we must define *Europe*. Is it France? Catholic Germany? Italy? Spain, Belgium and Portugal? or modern Greece, beloved by our Don Miguel de Unamuno, who was lecturing in this country at King’s College a few days ago?—a very small part of the earth’s surface, but just that part where the guiding ideas of civilisation took root. Their origin matters little.

‘England possesses two souls, hence her charm and interest: with one she still hankers after the forests of Germany and the flats of Angria in Schleswig-Holstein, and when Siegfried blows his horn the Englishman feels elemental forces calling. But the Roman Legions came, and, what is more important, Saint Augustine arrived just in time; and whether England likes it or not, she belongs to Europe irrevocably.’

‘You may be right,’ said I. ‘Yet I think that if any Government in this country tried to enforce the observance of the Treaty of Locarno to honour England’s signature to the full there would be some kind of revolution. I have no doubt that public opinion is overwhelmingly against any foreign commitment.’

‘The fact is,’ said my friend, ‘that the traditional balance of power policy is the only foreign policy that is instinctively accepted as right and reasonable by Englishmen. It is a kind of geographical conscience, and it is also a fact that the League of Nations only has a success here because in the popular mind both policies, in their essence diametrically opposed to each other, are confused and intertwined—equal partners. Yet it is true that the decisions of the International Court at The Hague are held up to scorn because the judges are not all British, nor even French. Strain every nerve to ensure that

Hitler's offer may not be treated in this country with the contempt of puritanical righteousness.

'Do not allow confused thinking and maudlin sentiment to destroy the foundation of your greatness, which is based on right effectively backed by force. What is right in politics, which are, in their essence, not the reign of law, but of life? Surely adaptation to environment and circumstance in a rapidly changing world. Perhaps you know that there is a whole school of German jurisprudence which maintains that there is no such thing as international law at present which the Spanish scholastics did so much to found. You remember Grotius, but we speak of his forerunners, Vitoria and Suarez. International law derives from Roman law, and its validity depends on the dominance of one power, Rome in antiquity—the Holy Roman Empire during the Middle Ages. There is no such predominant power and fountain of law. Let them remember in regard to the force that must back law, that its nature is spiritual rather than material. It is as important to build up the spirit of an army as to equip it with the latest and most effective armament. I wish that you, as a soldier, would tell me something about the present spirit of the British Army.'

I was not slow to accept his challenge, and the conversation continued, notwithstanding the rigour of the British Licensing Laws, until the early hours of the morning; we went to bed, but the Locarno Four was still in session, and two years later we are still at peace.

## CHAPTER XII

APRIL 1936

Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equal lustre, not omitting Ceremonies of bravery in the infancy of his nature.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE. *Hydriotaphia*.

WALKING through the less prosperous part of the East End of London I passed a funeral cortège such as I had not seen since I was a boy in Lancashire, except once in Buenos Aires. The hearse was surmounted with black ostrich plumes; the horses, finely caparisoned, were black; the coachman and groom were in deepest mourning. Six 'mutes' in silk hats with heavy bands of silk, and black gloves and black scarves, walked alongside. It might have been Lady Estridge's funeral, mentioned by Thackeray in *Pendennis*. The polished coffin was bright with brass fittings and carried a profusion of wreaths and flowers. The relations, in deep mourning, were in several well-turned-out two-horse carriages.

I asked who the dead man was—a mayor or a wealthy merchant at least? No, he was nobody in particular: he never made as much as £3 a week, but he had paid 'the Club'<sup>1</sup> three shillings or more a week for most of his working life in order to ensure for his relatives the satisfaction of a good funeral, and they had not failed him. The dead man had paid for the hearse and the coffin, for the flowers and the coaches, for the 'new rig-out' of

<sup>1</sup> Usually, to-day, a synonym for a wealthy commercial corporation.

the relatives and the funeral tea that would follow. It was the custom among some folk: £50 would not cover the outlay; it might be half as much again. They had six or eight miles to go to the cemetery. He would, of course, have a private grave there; and if there was any money over a good granite or Italian marble tombstone. And then he would be forgotten.

But for the burial money, of course, it would have been impossible to put up such a show. Its existence encouraged extravagance of a sort which is now fortunately on the wane, for such funerals are not seen in West Kensington or Hampstead. But poorer folk are far more tenacious of custom than the well-to-do, and the fact that they cling to a good funeral must not be dismissed as ignorance or mere folly. As Mrs. Cecil Chesterton says:

It is a gesture of homage, an expression of the simple and unshakable belief in human dignity which, however encompassed by dirt and demoralisation, cannot be destroyed. Encompassed by squalor of life, the poor send their dead to the grave in grandeur.

But they get far less value for their money here than in France, where all funerals are municipally managed and provided in eight different styles, or in Germany, where undertakers' price lists are under strict control. I have dealt at length with this question in *Burial Reform and Funeral Costs* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1938).

There is another explanation of the tendency on the part of those who can least afford to squander their 'alabaster box of ointment, very precious'; it is a reaction from the once common spectacle of the funeral of paupers, buried twenty in a grave with every circumstance of ignominy. Such things happen less often now, but the memory endures, and gives death its sting. Thomas Noel, who gave posterity *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*, also wrote *The Pauper's Drive* with its refrain:

Rattle his bones over the stones,  
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns.



It was at once set to music by Henry Russell. That was in 1839, but I heard British soldiers singing it in India in 1903, and they never failed to subscribe from their scanty pay for a tombstone to be placed on the grave of a dead comrade—and we buried many that year of fevers of various kinds. Malaria had not been invented: the card at the head of a sick man's bed bore instead the title '23 (a). Ague.' So often did I read them when I visited men in hospital that after nearly forty years they are imprinted vividly on my memory and below them, the pinched wan faces of mere boys, no older than I was, not a few of whom it was my duty to escort to the grave with a firing party and the regimental band. We returned to the tune of one of De Souza's marches, which did not cease till we reached barracks, where, if my memory serves me right, it was customary for the officer to stand the firing squad a pint of beer all round so as to revive the spirits of everyone. That was the right spirit, though it reads queerly in print.

In this same month in a country parish in Buckinghamshire a very old lady, bearing a name which appears in the earliest registers and is still well known and respected, was taken to her last resting-place in the churchyard from the almshouses where, as an old-age pensioner, she had spent her declining years. Her coffin was of varnished deal, made by the village carpenter and sold at no profit: her old friends themselves placed her in it; her grandchildren carried her out and placed the wheeled bier that is always ready under the tower in the church hard-by. A group of bonneted and bowler-hatted relatives and friends followed her. There was no lack of flowers on the bier; but they came from the gardens of those who knew her in life. The bell tolled: the parson spoke the familiar words, beginning with that magnificent but mistranslated passage, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' taken from one of the oldest, as also the most

glorious books of the Old Testament, Job,<sup>1</sup> and invoked at the last a blessing on the party. All was over in half an hour from the time the procession left the tiny room in the almshouses.

Burke said in a letter to Matthew Smith, 'I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little churchyard than in the tombs of the Capulets.' I agree with him, but would prefer my ashes rather than my bones to lie there, and would sooner see a wooden leaping-board (a horizontal plank on edge supported by two low posts) than any stone. Such a memorial will last as long as any who knew me, and that is surely enough.

An hour or two later I met at the railway station some of the older mourners—none of them under seventy—and they began to speak of old days recalled by the memory of 'the old lady.' 'The first time I saw that field,' said one, 'was before the railway came: I was a little 'un, standing like this'; and he spread his arms.

'To open your lungs?' asked a young woman, not of the original party. 'No, to scare the birds, that was what I was paid for. Sent off first thing, I was, to a corner

<sup>1</sup> As Froude reminded us eighty years ago, the Hebrew text bears little relation or is contrary in meaning to the accepted English versions.

*Great Bible of 1539.*

I know that my redeemer liveth and that I shall rise out of the earth in the latter day: that I shall be clothed again with this skin and see God in my flesh. Yea, I myself shall behold him, not with other but with these same eyes.

*Authorised Version, 1611.*

I know *that* my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: and *though* after my skin worms destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh I shall see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another.

*Revised Version, 1885.*

I know that my redeemer liveth, And that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth: And after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

'From my flesh' is better translated 'without my flesh': the writer refers, clearly, to a resurrection, not of the body, but of the spirit. Neither the compilers of the A.V., nor of the R.V. 250 years later, nor of the so-called 'New Prayer Book' in 1927, had the courage to revise the erroneous translation of Miles Coverdale.

of the field, with breakfast and dinner too, and told not to come back till supper-time ; but, Lord, I was only eleven, and had no notion of time. By ten o'clock I'd eaten the lot and was main hungry by twelve. But I learned things, mind you. I watched the birds and the beasts and the cattle, and the foxes and rabbits and voles and things. I got to know 'em ; many's the pheasant I snared in that wood ' ; and he pointed to a copse whose owner was better known to me than to him.

' Wages was low,' he continued, ' and food none too plentiful ; but living was cheap, for folk wanted less of other things. Candles was good enough for anyone in winter, and the sun in summer : wood was good enough for firing and cooking ; if we was lucky and had a joint it went to the baker or else we boiled it. The old mill was working and ground our own grain—we got a sack or two from the farm we worked on. Father kept a few pigs and mother a goat or two. There was no cinema, but beer was cheap and butter-milk easy to come by. Girls were as good-looking and boys as troublesome then as now.' He did not criticise the present ; he accepted it, but clearly had his doubts as to whether ' progress ' was a reality. His fine old face was furrowed, but his teeth were his own ; his hands were gnarled, but his gait was that of a much younger man. As I listened to him I reflected, not for the first time, that of all the principles now being applied in Germany, that of discouraging large cities and of decentralising industry is likely in the end to prove the most important and the most enduring in its results. We cannot breed that sort in towns. He and his wife had brought up a large family—all healthy because they knew how to do so. They ate plain food, but it was well cooked, and they lived a fuller life than many younger folk do to-day.

Politicians sometimes forget, and others are unaware, that there is a stratum of working-class and artisan folk mostly, but not all elderly, who do not follow ' their

betters' in regarding motor-cars and arterial roads, cinemas and tinned foods, patent medicines and the wireless, as upward steps on the path that leads towards a material paradise. There are many men and women, alike in cities and villages, who go their sturdy way guided by custom and instinct as to what is proper and right, seeking above all else to retain their independence, which is synonymous with their self-respect. And their ranks receive recruits, year after year, from the services, the police and from public servants of all kinds and from the workshops. They, and not the public schools or universities, represent to me the true rock from which we were hewn and the pit from which we were digged. They are seldom childless, and their children do them honour.

As I write these lines I have in mind half a dozen young men, all artisans, or in some skilled regular employment such as milking cows and tending pigs and sheep. I have known them almost since they left school at fourteen and began to fend for themselves. Some have been 'out' (*i.e.* of employment) for a time, but they have 'worked themselves back' before long. They have known the discipline, the worth of which for their sons and daughters the comfortable classes scarcely realise, of early rising six days a week with half an hour's ride or more, often in foul weather, on a cycle. Those who have cows to milk have to be on the job at 6 A.M. at latest and never finish before 7 P.M., though there is a long midday interval. They work 60 hours for 43 shillings, and at statutory county rates are not underpaid. Those in an engineering shop work fewer hours, even when trade is briskest and, whilst under twenty-one, make about as much on piece-work rates and are lucky if they get over 50s. when they come of age; being townsmen they pay more for rent and food than the countrymen who grow a good deal for themselves.

One of them came up from Edmonton to see us at home this Easter, bringing with him, on a tandem cycle, a radiant young woman. They had been walking out for a year or so and, this being his twenty-first birthday, were now with the consent of her parents betrothed. She went off for a time to see friends and he stayed to talk to me.

‘Are you not starting a bit early?’ said I, half in jest.

‘No,’ said he seriously, ‘we don’t think so. You see, I shall never earn much more than I do now; I may get another 10s. a week: it will come in handy when the children are growing up and want a lot to eat—I was one of a big family myself, so I know. With any luck before I’m forty most of the kids will be earning good money.’

‘What about a house?’

‘Father died two years back, as you remember; mother is alone but for me. We’re going to take on the house and she will live with us. She likes Sally and Sally loves her, so it’s quite all right: they are like mother and daughter, only easier. If it doesn’t work we can always shift.’

‘When will you marry?’

‘Christmas, we hope. That will give us all this summer and autumn for going about and seeing things together. Courting is good times. Once we are married it won’t be so easy perhaps—babies and all that.’

‘How old is she?’

‘She’ll be nineteen in June. My sister,’ he added proudly, ‘was married at eighteen, three years back, and her first two children have never given her a moment’s trouble—they’re grand—I hope ours are as good.’

The talk turned to hire-purchase—he would have none of it; to life insurance—he had a small ordinary branch endowment policy which gave him far better terms than any industrial policy paid weekly or monthly. It would protect her if he died and give them something when he was fifty and might find it hard to keep a job. His young mind was set upon laying the foundations of family life: he

was entering the married state with a certain pride. He had never, he volunteered, 'played games' with any girl—as many did—though he had walked out with several before he found his true mate in Sally. He had kept his body fit with home exercises and bicycling, and to my knowledge and within my memory had transformed it in the process from that of a weedy errand boy to one which the Guards would have been glad to accept.

A few days later I met a young man who left the sixth form of a public school with credit only two years ago and was now a private soldier in a line regiment. Seldom have I enjoyed anyone's company more than his. Instead of attending Peace Pledge Unions and League of Nations Union meetings and passing resolutions demanding 'drastic sanctions,' 'a world economic conference,' or 'a fresh appeal to the conscience of the world,' he had decided to play a part himself. Ill content with the life of a clerk in a great London office, a dispirited cipher, dealing with commodities he would never see, bought from and sold to persons he would never meet, for the profit of anonymous shareholders at the behest of directors with whom he had nothing in common, he had boldly 'chanced his arm' in the ranks. Army life clearly suited him: he carried himself better and he looked healthier. He was happy with his comrades-in-arms and did not lack friends. He hoped to attain commissioned rank later: he would sit for the examination in due course; whether successful or not, he was certain that he would leave the Army, after his term of service, better fitted for the world than when he entered it. He is probably a generation ahead of his time; but I think all the better of him for that. The fact that young men, drawn from every walk of life, live and work together in barracks is a great source of strength to European nations, in which the Army is not only a fighting but a social force, an integral part of their national system of education. Some day we may awake

to the fact that a citizen army makes for peace and that demands for warlike measures, by persons who are unable or do not know how to fight, and cannot learn till too late, are either useless or dangerous.

I asked another young man of good birth, who had also joined the ranks, how the morals and manners of his fellows compared with his former co-workers in the city. The real difference, he thought, was that a man's life in barracks was public and his thoughts tended to be public too. The greatest difference was in language and accent. These created a gap, almost a breach, between classes that was harder to bridge in England than in Scotland or the U.S.A., where a commercial magnate or landowner often spoke a tongue not easily distinguishable from that of his servant.

The public and secondary schools talked 'standard London English,' with a pronunciation which differed more from that of the masses than does the old from the new way of speaking Latin. This, rather than dress or outlook, marked a man as different from his fellows. Apart from this, he had found little to criticise and less to resent in the ways of his fellows. They were cleanly in habit; never greedy; seldom self-indulgent in liquor, but often slaves to tobacco, the craving for which was, to his mind, the cause of more crime than anything else. They were apt to 'scrounge' small articles—a tendency not unknown in higher circles. The use of 'bad language' was a mere habit; the poverty of vocabulary that restricted men to the use of three or four expletives was not more remarkable than the repetition of 'simply frightful,' 'perfectly terrible,' 'awfully jolly,' 'too lovely for words,' which echoed ceaselessly from fair lips at any sherry party.

He, too, was happy; he too had gone to the ranks from a public school and he expected a commission shortly. Both will do well.

I gained the impression from him and from many conversations with the rank and file of the British Legion, and in other quarters, that the publication in serial form in a Sunday newspaper of Lord Haig's *Diaries* is partly responsible for the popular reaction against France, which has taken some of our ministers by surprise. It was uppermost among the ex-service men with whom I dined this month at the annual dinner of the survivors of the garrison of Kut-al-Amara. No body of men during the whole of the last war suffered as they did. Like the army of Leonidas,

Four times a thousand men from Pelops' land  
Three thousand times a thousand did withstand.

After a long siege, gallantly withstood, the garrison was starved into surrender. Of the 2600 British rank and file who went into captivity in Turkey more than 1700 died. Some were lashed or clubbed to death, others died slowly of hunger and thirst. Captain Yeats Brown (in *Bengal Lancer*, 1930)

saw a party of 20 English soldiers arriving moribund at Mosul. They were literally skeletons alive and they brought with them three skeletons dead. One of the living made piteous signs to his mouth with a stump of an arm in which maggots crawled.

Captain Mousley has recorded what he saw of some of the Kut garrison in a Turkish hospital :

For the most part they were stark naked except for a rag round their loins, their garments having been sold to buy food. . . . One had just died and two or three corpses had just been removed but had lain there for days. Some were too weak to move. Those unable to walk had to crawl to the river for water. . . . One saw flies which swarmed by the million going in and out of living men's mouths.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have recorded at length in *Loyalties* (O.U. Press, 1928) the epic of the siege and the tragic fate of the survivors in the hands of the Turks.



Yet the survivors, twenty years later, were still good soldiers; their sole complaint was of the niggardly treatment of some of their number by the Ministry of Pensions, whose medical advisers underrated the indelible mark left on men's health by such experiences of which there could, of course, be no official record.

Mr. Duff Cooper is not to be suspected of any partiality towards the German thesis: he will not have forgotten the virulent misrepresentation, not many years ago, in the columns of that very newspaper which to-day occasionally sponsors Herr Hitler's views, of the 'Apology for England' which he delivered at Berlin. But the *Diaries* which, under his editorship, reveal Haig's difficulties with the French, perhaps somewhat one-sidedly, have awakened responsive and bitter memories in many hearts. Mr. Edwin Montagu and Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, to mention only two great figures, would, were they still alive, have bitterly resented the publication, at full length, of their letters and diaries which were never intended to be used as biographical, still less as historical, material. I am inclined to think Lord Haig would feel the same. Voltaire wrote, '*on doit des égards aux vivants, on ne doit aux morts que la vérité,*' but he is not always a safe guide.

An interesting feature of the present session, as contrasted with the last, is the emergence of back-bench opinions in Parliament as a factor which foreign Governments as well as our own must take into account. Twice in the past four months, the first occasion being on December 19 last, the views held by members at large have, rightly or wrongly, exercised a more immediate and decisive influence upon international affairs than those of the Cabinet. Whether the outcome of this repercussion of dissident opinion has been or will prove to be of value remains to be seen. It was responsible for Sir Samuel Hoare's resignation, and for the rejection of a

compromise in Ethiopia which Mussolini was, at the moment, prepared in principle to accept. From this followed a notable worsening of our relations with Italy, and a fresh burst of expenditure upon armaments.

The fact places a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of those who seek to mould public opinion. The immediate issues are clear, the indirect consequences are not apparent, and the utterances of public men reveal a deep cleavage of thought. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the approval of their brother bishops, in a letter read in all churches in December 1935, said that a new generation had grown up forgetful of the horror and foolishness of war. The Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, on the other hand, recently claimed that the present generation of undergraduates was so conscious of it that nine out of ten would refuse to bear arms on any pretext.

Who shall decide, when Doctors disagree  
And soundest casuists doubt, like you and me ?

Like Doctors thus, when much dispute has past,  
We find our tenets just the same as last.<sup>1</sup>

I doubt whether there is any real substance in either view.

‘ If the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself to the battle ? ’—whether for peace or for war, in the interests of justice, or the converse. The recent display of bad theology, poor judgment, and worse manners by certain clergy in a Northern diocese was in no sense an indication of the trend of public opinion, which is fortunately becoming increasingly independent of guidance by leader-writers, clergy and dons. When vital British interests are involved only a small minority of the country at large, or of the four million males of military age who might be called upon to serve with the

<sup>1</sup> Pope, *Moral Essays*, iii.

colours, would flinch from a recourse to arms if reason fails. Working-class and lower-middle-class opinion is more steadfast and better balanced than that of the minority which claims by voice and pen to represent the views of the universities and of 'intellectuals.' To a clear call from the nation there will be a clear response from the leaders, which will surprise the most observant student of politics. The trouble is that the average man thinks in terms of the last war and says, 'We will come when we are fetched,' or 'We will join up quick enough when we are told,' not realising that conditions have so changed that we cannot hope, as in 1914, to have eighteen months, or even eighteen weeks, in which to improvise an army. Nor is it generally realised that our Army, both regular and territorial, is much smaller than in 1914 and at least 20 per cent. below strength in personnel and even more under its establishment in equipment.

A Committee was appointed last year to inquire into social services in courts of summary jurisdiction and issued its report this month, in terms which afford no ground for complacency, that

Many offenders who might have been suitable for probation continue to be sent to prison. In 1933, 2253 youths and 1279 girls between 16 and 21 were sent to prison, of whom 34 per cent. and 40 per cent. respectively had not been previously found guilty of offences. It would appear unlikely that in all these cases committal to prison was necessary in the public interest.

Even in the case of lads and girls sent to Borstal institutions there is evidence of over-hasty recourse to institutional treatment. For instance we find the Governor of the Feltham Institution using these words:

'Probation was never tried with 32·5 per cent. of lads received during the year. . . . It is almost incredible that in anything like a third of cases probation could not, properly, have been tried, and it is quite incredible that the circumstances . . . justified the

imposition of shorter sentences of imprisonment in 12 per cent. of cases.'

Many thousands of adults are every year sent to prison for short sentences, many of whom in view of the Prison Commissioners would be suitable subjects for probation.

I sometimes wonder whether any steps short of the establishment of a Ministry of Justice will suffice to bring about any serious measure of reform in the administration of justice in this country. Neither the Lord Chancellor, the Home Office, nor the High Courts exercise real control over stipendiaries, justices or coroners' courts. Every recent official inquiry confirms the popular view that those institutions stand in need of far-reaching reforms.

The urgency of drastic changes in the administration of justice was well understood by Lord Sankey, whose departure from the Woolsack is a real loss to the cause of legal reform. He found his lay colleagues unenthusiastic, and some who were learned in the law recalcitrant; he was unable during his tenure of office to make or initiate a tithe of the changes that should be made in the interests of justice. Great hopes were aroused by the appointment of Sir John Simon as Home Secretary: few great lawyers have preceded him there, though much of the work is of the type which might appeal to a lawyer. Every sentence of capital punishment is reviewed by him and the royal clemency in scores of other cases is exercised every year on his advice. He is the Minister ultimately responsible for the administration of justice in police courts and quarter sessions, which deal with ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that come for trial: it is for him to initiate changes in most of the penal laws which affect the ordinary man. But it is almost impossible to raise these matters in Parliament. The abuses of the coroners' courts are notorious and have been condemned by a strong Departmental Committee,

but it is scarcely possible for Parliament to deal with individual cases, for the verdicts of the King's Courts and their proceedings cannot be criticised in Parliament.

Some coroners go out of their way at an inquest to add a rider absolving the employer from all blame in the case of a fatal accident. Such *obiter dicta* have no legal value, but are valuable assets to the young man from the Insurance Company when he seeks to settle the case as cheaply as possible out of court, and they are not without their effect upon the jury if the case is contested in the courts.

Judge Crawford, in his lively and intimate *Reflections and Recollections*,<sup>1</sup> has indicated some of the points which most need attention at the hands of 'the politicians who are supposed to watch over the interests of the humbler classes with such peculiar care and attention.' His practical experience as a county court judge entitles him to speak with authority. It is a pity that in a House of Commons in which lawyers of eminence abound there is no group or informal committee pledged to keep reform of the law and of judicial procedure in the foreground.

The scathing satire and biting sarcasm of Mr. Justice Maule eighty years ago aroused public opinion and compelled the Government of the day to establish Divorce Courts. We need something of the sort to-day to bring to public notice the inadequacy of our judicial procedure to give justice to those who seek it. There is no list of Justices of the Peace: there is no handbook of Home Office Circulars issued for their guidance. There is no legal manual officially issued for their instruction. They are appointed without personal interviews, or any statement of qualifications, by the Lord Chancellor on the recommendation of a Lord-Lieutenant advised by an anonymous Committee on a variety of grounds, few of which have reference to their judicial competence.

<sup>1</sup> Marchand Press, Ltd. (1936).

I dined one night at the Italian Embassy, with several other Members of Parliament. Our host, Count Grandi, has had as difficult a task lately as our Ambassador in Rome. Both have seen their hopes shattered and much that they worked for denied them; both deserve well of the countries to which they are accredited as well as their respective nations. Ambassadors are mouthpieces, not megaphones: they have to convey unpleasant messages with clarity and with an emphasis precisely proportionate to the occasion. What they leave unsaid is as important as what they say: their authority in the exercise of their office is proportionate to the confidence they inspire at home.

The idea that diplomatic language is evasive, cloudy and imprecise is utterly false: the test of diplomacy is the extent to which it can prevent misunderstandings: its bane is the readiness of the daily Press to proclaim, as the view of the nation, opinions which contradict the officially expressed attitude of its own Government. It is not too high a price to pay, perhaps, for freedom of the Press, but it is none the less embarrassing.

Count Grandi was, as always, cheerful, confident and well content to discuss, with knowledge, many topics of general interest, in preference to the news which was spread across the face of the evening papers. As I listened to him talking of the struggles which had gone to make united Italy—a process not yet complete—it was borne in upon me that even long residence in a country and good working knowledge of the language do little to help a foreigner to understand the mainsprings of another nation's activity. It was all so real, so vital to him: I had read of it too, but it was remote. To him the present regime was the necessary consequence of the past, almost a fulfilment of prophecy, '*teste David cum Sybilla*'; to me it was the outcome of a revolution, the reaction to anarchic socialism, sown by Soviet Russia in the seed-bed created by post-war miseries. He did not dissent from

this view, but held it to be historically inadequate because it failed to emphasise the deep roots of Fascism in Italian history. It was there before Mussolini was born : his was the genius to bring it to the birth, and thus to give expression to the hopes and yearnings of a nation which has not forgotten its past.

## CHAPTER XIII

MAY 1936

Better to hunt in fields, for health unbought,  
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.  
The wise, for cure, on exercise depend ;  
God never made his work, for man to mend.

He 'scapes the best who, nature to repair,  
Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air.

DRYDEN. *Epigram to his kinsman, John Dryden.*

I SEEM from my diary to have spent most of this month sitting in a great room at the Board of Trade as member of a Committee appointed under the Chairmanship of Lord Moyne 'to consider the position of British films, having in mind the approaching expiry of the Cinematograph Films Act, 1927, and to advise whether any, and if so what, measures are still required in the public interest to promote the production, renting and exhibition of such films.'

The terms of reference were wide, and our inquiry, which lasted till October, was not perfunctory. The importance of the industry may be deduced from a few figures. There are some 8000 cinemas in the British Empire showing English-speaking films, of which 4500 are in Great Britain, as compared with 14,500 in the U.S.A. The capital invested in the industry in Britain is about £100 millions, if the value of cinemas is included.

Net box-office receipts in the U.S.A. are £140 millions



a year, compared with £36 millions in this country. English-speaking films bring in an annual revenue of £36 millions, of which £3 millions reach British producers, the remainder to Americans.

Our first step was to ensure that the Treasury were prepared to instruct the Stationery Office to print and publish the evidence given before us, except such parts as were confidential. The next to decide whom we should hear, and in what order, with the dual object of expediting our work and saving witnesses from being kept waiting for our convenience, as is apt to happen in a court of justice. We acted on the assumption that their time was more valuable than ours, and allowed ample time for each witness; if he took less time than expected we adjourned early: if longer, we sat late. We gave them fourteen days' notice, and asked them to send in an abstract of the evidence they proposed to give; this document, circulated in advance, enabled us to mark points which seemed to require elucidation by cross-examination.

We sat at a horseshoe table, the witness in the centre facing the official shorthand writers—amazingly competent young women who had the gift of recording, as it seemed, the evidence given by two persons simultaneously in reply to two questions and yet to make sense of the whole.

What evidence was given and what questions were asked may be seen from the published minutes of our proceedings. All that I can usefully record here is the impression left by the witnesses on my mind of the state of the industry. It was wholly unfavourable. The producers disagreed profoundly among themselves. Few, and those the least powerful, were wholly British: some were only nominally under British control. The administrative capacity of those who were reputed to have earned great wealth from their activities was notably inferior to their ability to make money. The industry as a whole is organised neither vertically nor horizontally:

some producers are also renters and exhibitors, through various financial channels; others are renters but not exhibitors. To some the production and exhibition of British-made films is a disagreeable necessity: to others it is a means of livelihood. The leading lights in the business were, with few exceptions, not born and bred here; their roots are not deep and their outlook differs greatly from that of the heads of other great industries.

The industry being Anglo-American, and the American market being the biggest, some producers have tended to take the line of least resistance, so far as the law allows, and to evade the law by gentlemen's agreements (the term is theirs) to break it. The ease with which they have obtained finance in the City has encouraged them in courses which men risking their own money would scarcely have adopted.

To the broader interests of the nation they are, in their view properly, indifferent. The test of a film is its box-office value: this depends largely on the breadth of its appeal. The lowest common denominator—the film which is acceptable to the largest number—pays best. Gresham's Law, whereunder bad currency tends to drive out good, seems to be of very wide application!

Yet the effect of the cinema on the public mind is probably more important than that of the Press. It is, for many, the principal source of new ideas, and of mental attitudes. Attempts to use it primarily to inculcate social ideals and cultural aims have met with indifferent success, even in Germany, Italy and Russia, where the soil is favourable to such developments. But does it follow that we must leave such an instrument in the hands of private persons, whose past history and recent achievements would not secure them a hearing in other walks of life?

We<sup>1</sup> suggested, eventually, that the administration

<sup>1</sup> Viz. Lord Moyne (Chairman), Mr. A. C. Cameron, Mr. J. S. Holmes, M.P., Mr. J. J. Mallon, Hon. Eleanor Plumer, and myself.

of the Act of 1927 as amended should be entrusted to a Films Commission, consisting of

a Chairman and not less than two, or more than four, other members who need not necessarily be on a whole-time basis. They would be appointed by the Government for specified periods and would be represented in the House of Commons by a Minister of the Crown or in some other appropriate way. We contemplate that the Members of the Commission should be adequately paid persons whose suitability for their task is unimpeachable. By their absolute impartiality, careful administration and scrupulous justice they would command the confidence of every branch of the film industry, their constant aim being the creation of a healthy expanding industry to the benefit alike of the Empire, the nation, the public who see the films and all the commercial interests concerned.

We added that the problems of the several branches of the industry were so complex that it would be essential for the Commissioners to avail themselves of the best advice in the industry. But, in the immortal words of Gilbert,

The prospect of a lot of honest men in close proximity  
Athinking for themselves is what  
No man can stand with equanimity.

The idea of a Commission appealed to the exhibitors, but not to the majority of the producers or renters, for reasons which we can well imagine, and the proposal was a year later rejected by the Board of Trade but received much support at the eleventh hour from the Trade and in Parliament.

When not at my editorial office, or in Parliament, or sitting in a Committee room, I spent many hours this month investigating Industrial Assurance, in preparation for the book which, in conjunction with Dr. Hermann Levy, I brought out a year later. The task carried me

into some strange places and revealed queer things, but I need not touch on them here; they are recorded in their proper place.<sup>1</sup>

A young Englishman, who had been teaching English in a German University, came to see me one morning, full of hope and confidence in an eventual Anglo-German understanding and as much hurt as any German could be by the amazing ingenuity shown by correspondents of British newspapers in Germany and elsewhere in selecting items of news, usually not themselves inaccurate, which were calculated to foster ill-will and misunderstanding, to the virtual exclusion of events and happenings which might have a different effect. The same evening I had a visit from an Englishman who was earning his living in Paris: the report he brought me was far less cheerful. The British Press was underestimating the extent of the financial and governmental weakness, a *débâcle* must come within the year. Society in every grade was demoralised: there was fear, and hatred: Soviet interests and money dominated many organs of the Press. The great cities were drifting apart from the provinces where the electorate was less prone than at any previous time in his memory to political hero-worship. He thought a dictatorship inevitable, whether of right or left, it was too soon to say, but probably left.

He had some interesting views as to the part played by the Army in European politics. In providing Germany with a professional long-service Army under the Treaty of Versailles we had, to his mind, laid the foundations of the present Reich. Universal compulsory military service was a burden, but custom made it light: it was also an asset, for though, to use his own metaphor, the boulder might rock, its centre of gravity moved but little, thanks to the Army, which was professionally above politics until the last moment when it might intervene to save nations

<sup>1</sup> *Industrial Assurance*, Wilson and Levy (O.U. Press, 1937).

from anarchy. The memory of Boulanger's failure in 1889 was not yet forgotten. He was the last of a line of dictators which began with Napoleon I. Since then, as observed by Captain McEwen,<sup>1</sup> so greatly has France feared the rise of an individual to supreme power in the State that even the innocent have frequently suffered, and it was with a grudging hand that France gave Joffre the powers of generalissimo. Thanks to Boulanger France has hitherto withstood the authoritarian infection.

But could she live in modern Europe as an ill-organised, tax-evading, colony-owning Power, publicly declaring her fear of Germany and Italy but privately in greater fear of strife at home? He thought the fear of Germany and Italy groundless: he did not believe the Army shared it. Nations were never destroyed, they decayed: France was decaying, or at least decadent, at the moment, but he knew and loved her too well not to believe that she would find her soul again. When she did so she would realise that her heritage of civilisation was too great and too noble to suffer an alliance with the barbarians of Soviet Russia.

Whitsunday this year fell on May 31. A day or two before the end of May, as the Dail Eireann in Dublin was making known to the world its decision to abolish the Senate and, with it, one of the few remaining 'safeguards' in the Constitution of 1922 and of other things, I took a last moment decision to revisit Kerry.

The *Innisfallen* left Fishguard at 12.40 A.M.: ten hours later we stepped on the wharf in Cork's innermost harbour, just beyond the Ford Car and Irish Dunlop Factories. 'Any machine-guns?' asked the Examiner cheerfully, chalking my pack without waiting for my reply. A resident insisted on showing me the town, beginning with the Grand Parade where the motor buses start for the interior. I noted that the inevitable

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century and After*, vol. 121, p. 621, May 1937.

Woolworth's shop was selling everything for sevenpence—the result of tariffs I was told, but did people object? No! Let a few pay more for luxuries. We turned in to an eating-house, for we had not breakfasted, and my host drove home the moral. The bread was of flour milled in Cork; the bacon was from Tralee; the butter, with a taste to which the imported article cannot aspire, was local produce. (For some unknown reason Ireland has never become famous for cheese.) The 'Camp Coffee' was made in Dublin, the sugar in Mallow. The list of Irish-made goods was endless—thanks to tariffs. Irish cement and Irish tiles were now on the market. All was well with Ireland: they had lost the Senate—it was a pity, but the more responsibility they put on the Government the less likely it was to be foolish.

I did not wholly share his optimism. The Irish Free State, with a population of four millions, is too small a country to recover economic health by means so drastic, and the figures of revenue and population were less buoyant than my host's spirits.

I was anxious to get to my destination, and at my suggestion he found a lorry driver ready to give me a seat as far as Killarney—a three-hour run. We stopped half-way for some food and I showed the driver this cutting from the local paper:

### THRILL FOR PIGS

FELL ONE BY ONE OUT OF CONVEYANCE

While a lorry was conveying fat pigs to Waterford Bacon Factory, the lower door at the rear flew open and the lorry began to shed pigs until about ten were lost. As each porker fell on to the road it seemed to be dazed for about two minutes. Then every pig picked itself up and ran in the wake of the lorry. When the lorry driver saw what had happened he returned to retrieve his lost property, remarking that some of the brutes must have been wounded unto death as they were thick fat. They were all returned to the lorry, however, nothing the worse for having fallen out.

His comment was a counterpoise to the easy optimism of my friend in Cork :

Aye—true Irish, them pigs—they followed the man who was taking them to their death. Even after he had let them down and given them a chance of life they got up dazed-like and went after him—true Irish, them pigs.

He would say no more.

From Killarney to Tralee my fellow travellers were a bookmaker on the way to the races with his assistant. He undid his sack to show me his signboards. We were alone in the compartment and he talked freely: he was a republican and proud of it; he had never been to England though he liked the English. It was enough for him that Ireland was better off now than in 1916. The poor were richer, the rich were poorer, though on balance Ireland might be poorer. Trade with England had fallen (it was £84 millions in 1924 and £25 millions in 1935) and no other country could take its place. But Ireland was no longer tied to England: if England got into another war, say with Italy or Germany, the Irish would know how to take advantage of the situation.

His companion disagreed with him. Ireland could not live alone in the world: she had no friends anywhere. England was sorely weakened by the loss of Ireland, but the loss was mutual. Ireland was a great recruiting ground in the old days: the Irish had helped to win all our wars. Now Irishmen could only enlist in England or Belfast and, even so, might be marked men at home; 4000 youths, he read in the papers, had sailed to England last year from Cork alone to find employment. The national schools were emptying: there were fewer pupils every year. De Valera had said that they would have to bring the Irish back from America to re-people Ireland and develop its industries afresh: yet he had put two men off the land for every one he put into employment in industry. I left them to fight it out, interposing

now and then to stir the embers of a conflict which they seemed to enjoy.

They had a drink at my cost in Tralee, which sends much bacon to England, where it is sold retail, thanks to the bounty, cheaper than in Tralee. Then over the hills by rail to Dingle—a distance of some thirty miles, in two and a half hours. The peninsula is one of the least visited and most striking parts of Ireland: the bays of Tralee and Brandon, separated only by a narrow spit of sand, are of great beauty: the mountains behind—running to 3400 feet, of a grandeur unsurpassed in the Kingdom. This part of Kerry is treeless, and the clear gaunt cliffs on the seaward side vividly recall South Persia. From Dingle I went by car round Sleah Head, past the lofty, forbidding Blasket Islands, reaching Ballyferriter, not far from Smerwick Harbour, before sunset. I was the first visitor of the season and was unannounced but, having bought a pound of sausages and a Bologna in Tralee, was served with a good dinner—mostly of my own bringing—at short notice.

Most of the people in this corner of Ireland talk nothing but Irish among themselves: the children cannot talk or understand English—their elders can do both, but they are not always easily understood. Yet they are not of 'Irish' blood—they are as much mixed as the English. The village names refer to Danish invaders—just as in my corner of Hertfordshire—and of villages burnt by Danes—again as in my county. 'The field of skulls' and some ruins testify to the cold-blooded murder by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1588 of all Spanish survivors he was able to trace, in order to show that aggression did not pay, or to promote racial purity. Yet Spanish marks on the houses at Dingle, and Spanish names and traits exist to show that they too have left their marks. Spaniards are known and disliked to-day as inveterate poachers of fish and lobsters: the Free State patrols cannot stop them. There is one village with largely English names—



a colony of migrants from another island, and the historians of 'the Kingdom' have evidence of far more extensive immigrations in yet earlier days.

From Slea Head to Smerwick the scene is of rare beauty. Great cliffs, the home of much wild life, including the peregrine falcon, face the Atlantic, which has broken through at one point to form a bay with a narrow mouth. On the landward side runs a mountain range culminating to the east in Brandon Mountain—3500 feet.

The innkeeper at Smerwick urged me to call on 'the Canon,' a well-liked and much respected man. I was fortunate in finding him at home. He was a retired Army Chaplain nearer eighty than seventy years of age, with a great record of war service in three continents: he had built himself a beautiful little cabin on the edge of the cliff overlooking the bay. There he and his wife lived in a little garden of their own, making a good library and many friends. His interest in his surroundings was as great as that of any young Irish patriot and much more expert. Geology and folk-lore, Public Health and Public Utility Societies, Old Age Pensions and Blind Persons Rules, Unemployment Regulations and the like, he knew them all and could always help and advise when asked. A Protestant and a Loyalist, he could speak Irish; he was on good terms with the Catholic clergy and the Government officials and had good things to say of both. He had stuck to his house during 'the troubles' and went unharmed everywhere. But his main interests were birds and sea-fishing and gardening. A fine example of adaptability, of doing the best of things in the clear and gentle light of the sunset of life.

With him I saw the ruins of an Elizabethan fort, not yet taken over by the Antiquities Department of the Free State Government, and St. Brandon's Chapel (well cared for to-day under Government control) and buildings of even earlier date connected with the Danish invasion.

He found me good lodging for the night at Feohanagh, close by Smerwick Harbour, a hamlet dominated by the Martello Tower on the cliffs, 1000 feet above the village, put up 120 years ago as part of our preparation against Napoleon. I climbed the hill and was joined on the top by two youths who were cutting turf for fuel. Ravens and jackdaws were nesting near, they said, and they spoke of a peregrine falcon's nest in the cliff 300 feet below. They had often been on watch for Spanish and French fishing vessels who came in to poach: they had been caught and fined heavily sometimes, but the Free State patrol was not strong enough these days.

I was asked to sup early, for my hostess, and indeed every man, woman and child, was going to 'the Mission' that evening and the house would be empty. Each parish in Ireland, I was told, is visited for a week, at intervals of some years, by a group of 'Redemptorist' fathers, whose task it is to quicken the faith of the flock. My hostess had given up her plans for a Whitsuntide trip to Killarney. Few, she said, would leave the parish during the Mission. It would not be right: after all they only came once every five years.

I walked out after supper and saw hundreds of young men and boys on bicycles, and many more men and women of all ages in pony and donkey carts converging on the church by every road from four or five miles around. 'It's a part of their education,' explained my hostess later: 'it's not so much we have in common with each other than we can do without the Faith and the Mother of God'—and she crossed herself.

I was early afoot next day, and met the same impressive stream going to High Mass, for it was Whitsunday. Each group greeted me politely, or returned my salute with a smile and a nod. The first visitor in the season is like the cuckoo, a sign that summer is near. From the tiny harbour creek of Coos the path began to climb steeply: it is a pilgrim way some hundreds of years old.

At the top of the pass—itsself almost three thousand feet high—I was rewarded by a view as fine as any in the United Kingdom—North to the Shannon, South to the Blaskets, North-East to the hills between Cork and Killarney, South-East to Kenmare. On this coast some vessels of the Armada were wrecked: I could see the very place. Sir Walter Raleigh came afterwards with his army to kill the survivors—I could see the very ‘field of skulls’ on which those perished by the sword who had been saved from the storm. On the north lay the Bay of Tralee, where Roger Casement landed: I knew the spot and could see it clearly. In the distance I could see the very field where last year I had picked up a palæolithic flint axe and the sandhills where the horns of the Irish elk had been unearthed. Below me the Chapel of St. Brandon was clearly visible: a few hundred feet above was his oratory, a famous place of pilgrimage whither some fifty years ago a Bishop was carried to his chair amidst thousands of the faithful. Beyond was Dingle Bay, where in 1796 the French would have commenced the conquest of Ireland but for a timely gale. *Efflavit Deus et dissipati sunt.*

I made my way down the steep slopes with regret: I would fain have feasted my eyes longer on the scene. But the hills were powdered with snow—a rare event at Whitsuntide—and the wind was cold. An hour later I was on the main road again, passing in review the whole population of Brandon on their way from church at Cloghane. The universal observance of the festivals of the Church and of communal Sunday worship is here part of the rhythm of life, as it once was in England and indeed in all Europe, where Christian missionaries wisely retained and developed the rhythm of pagan worship. To worship God without admitting any relation between man and the universe—the succession of the seasons—the turn of the year—the times of sowing and reaping, of lambing and of garnering—is to deprive religion of its significance and reality. Life in the city, which knows

none of these things, breeds cranks and fanatics, starved of man's birthright.

I stopped on the road for a Guinness: the keeper of the house welcomed me as an old friend. 'London,' he said, 'is looking up. Hundreds of boys and girls have left these parts in the past twelve months to work there and most of them have found work. They mostly go to London, it is the only place they know and they help each other to get situations.' He mentioned half a dozen of the newer of London's mean suburbs and some of the worst of the oldest slum areas—they were mere names to him. 'We get letters,' he said, seeing my face clouded at his recital; 'many of them are sending money home, they all find work for themselves; they are some of our best.'

My heart sank as I walked down the road: I felt sympathy with and sorrow for De Valera and all idealists. On the wall of the National School I saw the freshly painted slogan:

*Honour the patriot dead: rally to the cause and join the I.R.A.*

On the little bridge across a trout stream was another war-cry:

*Wear an Easter Lily.*

*Death to Traitors and Informers.*

These and similar calls to action, however misguided, were the only advertisements I saw in a ten-mile walk along the main road. At the same hour the next day I was in the London 'Underground'; the placards there spoke of a lipstick, 'gloriously thrilling, wickedly red'; of imaginary cures for fancied bodily ills and the toll of time and advancing age. Had the youth of Kerry made a good exchange: had they not sold themselves into bondage? Were not the inscriptions on the school wall less harmful than those on the Tube? 'Fear not them which kill the body . . . but rather fear him which is

able to destroy both soul and body.' How loud would be the protests against a tax on advertisements! How strong is the opposition to any control over or taxation of patent medicines and remedies and cosmetics! The Postmaster-General himself is content to receive some thousands of pounds annually for advertising such things in stamp booklets and is not careful to inquire whether the wares he pushes are fraudulent or illusory; the B.B.C. is little better. It looks to revenues from advertisements to provide money for important public services and thus shares one of the main weaknesses of the public press. It cannot afford to scrutinize too closely the claims made by advertisers, nor the terms in which they are set forward.

A young Irishman from Cork, making his first trip to England for a sure job, was standing by me as on deck we saw the last of the coast of Ireland. 'May I not return!' he said. 'There's nothing but miseries there for the likes of me. The curse of politics is on us and nowhere to go but England these days.' 'Are you a Republican?' I asked. 'Sure I was,' he replied, 'but I'll be a loyaller subject of the King than my father ever was, now I know what's what. If the job fails on me I'll join the Navy or the Army, but return I will not.'

## CHAPTER XIV

JUNE 1936

The first of the direct guarantees of civil liberty in this country is 'the open administration of justice according to known laws truly interpreted and fair constructions of evidence.' These are the words of Hallam in his *Constitutional History* as quoted by Lord Justice Farwell in a famous case. That the law shall be certain and the same for all, that no person shall be deprived of his liberty save by due process of law, that the prosecutor must prove his case by competent evidence, that the accused must have every opportunity of defending himself and that the trial must be conducted by an independent and impartial judge and, not least important, that the accused can only be detained on a definite charge . . . these are the bulwarks of liberty.

LORD MACMILLAN. *Law and Politics* (1937).

THE event of this month was the publication of the Report of the Tribunal appointed<sup>1</sup> to inquire whether, and if so in what circumstances, and by whom, any unauthorised disclosure was made of information relating to the Budget, as presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on April 20. The Commission held eight sittings in public: its report was unanimous. It was not sitting as a court of justice in which a definite charge is made against a particular individual, all evidence not strictly relevant to the charge being excluded. There was no prosecutor: examination of witnesses was undertaken from the Bench: there was no accused person: there was no definite charge and no possibility of an appeal. In some cases those who were under suspicion in the public Press were

<sup>1</sup> Under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act, 1921. Cmd. 5184, 1936 (Home Office).

not at the outset represented by counsel before the Tribunal: at no time could they or their representatives object to the reception of hearsay evidence, and they were prevented from presenting their testimony as before an ordinary court of justice. The Tribunal were distinguished lawyers: inadmissible evidence did not affect them, but it prejudiced the public mind.

The first step was taken in Parliament as a consequence of information derived from Lloyd's that an undue amount of insurance against Budget risks had been effected just before Budget day. The second step was the appointment of Mr. Justice Porter, Mr. Gavin (now Mr. Justice) Simonds, K.C., and Mr. Roland Oliver, K.C., to be a Tribunal of Inquiry. The Report of the Tribunal signed on May 27 and published on June 5, was that

there was an unauthorised disclosure by Mr. J. H. Thomas to Sir Alfred Butt of information relating to the Budget . . . and that use was made by Sir Alfred Butt of that information for the purpose of his private gain.

The conduct of no other person was directly impugned by the Tribunal's verdict, which involved the immediate resignation from Parliament of the two men whose names they mentioned. Others, if there were any, as was widely bruited, were allowed to revert to the obscurity in which they had been accustomed to live and, doubtless, to thrive.

On June 11 a crowded House listened in intent silence to the personal explanations which, by long custom, Members are permitted to make after question time. It is right that what they said should be placed on record in a more accessible form than the daily papers or Hansard. I give them here in full.

*Mr. J. H. Thomas :*

No Member of this House ever addressed it under such painful circumstances as I do to-day, and I know I express the sentiments

of all parties when I hope that never again will any Member be similarly placed. I emphasised in my letter of resignation to the Prime Minister that no Member of a Government had any right to consider his personal position; the best interests of his country must always be the paramount consideration. Therefore, when the Tribunal concluded its public sittings I immediately tendered my resignation from the Government, and gave my reasons. I feel sure the House will agree that I took the only course open to me in my position. The Tribunal has now given its report and it is public property. The Members of this House will be able themselves to form their own judgment on the evidence and the findings. I ought, however, to state that I made it clear to my personal friends that, whatever the findings of the Tribunal, I intended to accept them without challenge, not because a judicial body is infallible and unable to make mistakes—indeed, if that were so there would be no need of the provision made for a Court of Appeal, although in this case there is none—but because I believed, and still believe, there is no fairer or more impartial court in the world than a British judicial tribunal, which, I am certain, is not influenced either by party prejudice or class bias. I believe that of this Tribunal, however keenly I feel the bearing of the report upon myself. I do not, therefore, intend to go into details. I must let those who have read all the evidence and the report judge for themselves. I am, however, entitled to say, and I do say, to this House, regardless of any report, that I never consciously gave a Budget secret away. That I repeat, in spite of the Tribunal's findings. To attempt to deal in detail with some of my private affairs would be as painful to me as to this House. This much, however, I will say: My vices, if they are vices, have always been open, and never disguised, even from my own family.

I ask the House to bear with me a few moments while I explain my future attitude. After resigning my Cabinet seat I am still a Member of this House. Very naturally I have received much advice, and the course I have decided upon is a course that I know will cause keen disappointment to many, but it is a course which follows the dictates of my own conscience, and in so grave a personal matter that is the sole test. I was urged, and especially by my most loyal



supporters in Derby, to stick fast, and not resign. I appreciate their reasoning and their loyalty, but all my life I have urged the people of this country to look up to this House as the greatest democratic assembly in the world; to do nothing and allow people to say, as they would be entitled to say, that democracy was not being given a chance to express its view, would belie all my past principles, and I refuse to do it. I have been urged to resign and fight Derby again. Many of my friends still believe I should win. Sir, I have not the strength left at present to fight a by-election; and even if I had, and if I won, that victory in a constituency could not wipe the stain of the Report from me—I should feel every day and every hour that it was a mockery; my conscience and my better self would revolt from it. I have rejected that advice.

I, therefore, intend to resign immediately. In thanking all parties in this House for their kindness, thought and generosity over a period of 27 years, I can only hope that during that long period I have made some contribution of benefit to what to-day is almost alone the bulwark of democratic Government the world over, and which I still want to go on unimpaired. I will only say that no words in this Debate can wound me more than I have been wounded; nothing can be ever said that can humiliate me more than I have already been humiliated. But I can at least go to the one who shares all my trials and all my triumphs, and who still believes in me in this, the darkest hour of my life.

Mr. Thomas was followed by Sir Alfred Butt.

*Sir Alfred Butt:*

I ask the House to bear with me while I make a personal explanation in what will be my last address to this Parliament. Until to-day I had not the slightest intention of resigning my seat, but having regard to the action taken by the right hon. Member for Derby (Mr. J. H. Thomas) I feel that it would be impossible for me to take up a different position. I wish to reiterate emphatically that neither the right hon. Member for Derby nor any other Cabinet Minister has ever consciously or unconsciously disclosed to me any information whatsoever of a confidential nature. I would only ask the House to hear my reasons. When I received information of the

appalling decision of the Tribunal, I had one definite conviction. Conscious as I was of the grave injustice done to me, I knew I could rest assured, after reading the recent speech of the Lord Chancellor, that the matter would not be allowed to remain where it is, and that I should have an absolute right to be tried in a court of justice, where my case could be tried alone, where I should have full notice of the charge made against me, where only properly admissible evidence would be given both for me and against me, but where no matters concerning other people of which I had never heard and whose very existence was unknown to me, would be introduced, with all the prejudice that such introduction might invoke. To my horror I learned yesterday for the first time that no such opportunity was to be afforded to me. There is to be no prosecution ; my case is never to be tried.

I would ask the right hon. and hon. Members to visualise the position in which I now find myself. I have been condemned, and apparently I must suffer for the rest of my life from a finding against which there is no appeal, upon evidence which apparently does not justify a trial, and there is now no method open to me by which I can bring the true and full facts before a jury of my fellow-men. With the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, I cannot conceive that the combined ingenuity and learning of the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary, and the Attorney-General, could not have devised some method by which the vital issues raised could be properly and fairly tried in a court of justice in the usual way. Personally, I should have been quite prepared to risk the prejudice referred to by the Attorney-General in his statement yesterday. If, therefore, these hon. and learned Gentlemen have failed to devise a method of giving me a trial, how can I ask this House to acquit me ?

If any good may come from this, the most miserable moment of my life, I can only hope that my position may do something to prevent any other person in this country being subject to the humiliation and the wretchedness which I have suffered, without trial, without appeal and without redress. Can it be wondered that I feel from the bottom of my heart that I am the victim of a grave injustice ? I have tried to serve this House and my constituents faithfully to the best of my ability for 14 years, and I now leave it with only one

consolation—absolute knowledge of my innocence, although I am, apparently, to be denied the opportunity of proving it. Even now I hope and pray that some means may still be available in future to enable me to prove my integrity. Mr. Speaker, I propose immediately to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds.

The Prime Minister, who followed, concluded with the following words :

There are one or two observations I desire to add. The House is always jealous, and properly jealous—all of us—of its reputation and of the conduct of its Members, and where errors have been committed, however serious I would say, the House looks to see that expiation is made. I wish, before I sit down, to tell the House that, in my view, both as leader of the House, and as a man, that expiation in full has been made by those two Members. The finding has gone against them, against which there is no appeal ; whatever stigma may remain from that finding remains for all time, with no possibility of appeal. This House they have left for the last time, and it is closed to them. The unthinking cruelty of modern publicity has been theirs for weeks, perhaps the severest punishment which modern civilisation can give ; that has been theirs in full measure. There is one other thing, and I think perhaps the older I grow the more conscious I am of it ; when I see a man put before a Tribunal of that nature, to answer questions on episodes in his past life where anything may be brought up, I ask myself : ‘ Which of us would escape ? ’ They are paying the penalty in full.

Let us hope with all our hearts that we may never again take part in so painful a scene in this House. I am confident that no Resolution of this House will be passed, as no words will be uttered by me, to make more bitter for those two colleagues of ours the bitter experience which has been theirs and through which they have passed to-day. I do not propose at this moment to move any Amendment to the Motion which I have put down, because I do not wish in any way to limit the range of the Debate that may follow, and that can follow on the original Motion ; but I do propose at some time in the course of the afternoon or evening, at a suitable moment,

to move, in line 2, to omit the words 'now considered,' and to insert the word 'accepted.'

I listened to every word of the debate which followed. Nothing said by the Attorney-General then, or previously, seemed to me to dispose in any way of the view, put forward with great clarity by Sir Stafford Cripps, a lawyer of great eminence in the profession, that both the parties before the House, and others mentioned in the Report of the Tribunal, should have been prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act, as they themselves earnestly desired. He attached no weight to the argument adduced by Sir D. Somervell that the jury would be prejudiced by the publicity given to the Report of the Tribunal. 'Coroners' trials' are exceedingly likely to prejudice a jury, but they go on: the findings of the Inquiry into the Gresford mining disaster did not prevent the prosecution (and acquittal) of those whose conduct was impugned. A Court of Inquiry may be followed by a Court-Martial.

I was satisfied in my own mind that the interests of justice were ill-served on this occasion and that it would be the last time that the Act of 1921 would be invoked, at least until the Official Secrets Act had been amended—in directions indicated by the Attorney-General as 'worthy of careful inquiry.' But (January 1938) nothing has yet been done in this direction.

The attitude of the public at large merited the condemnation uttered by Macaulay in his review of Moore's *Life of Byron* :

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. . . . Once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. . . . We must make a stand against vice. . . . Some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences are treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. . . . If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping boy, by whose

vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. . . . At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and broken-hearted. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.

But the essay deserves to be read as a whole, for it still rings true.

In saying this I do not wish to underestimate the strength or the justification for the widespread feeling that the Tribunal had lifted a curtain which had hitherto hidden from the general public commercial usages which, however justifiable when practised by merchants in the course of their business for their own protection, are liable to grave abuse when used by others for purposes of speculation. I was reminded of a passage in Suetonius (Book VIII), who thus describes an incident in the life of the Emperor Vespasianus, of whom he writes :

*erat enim dicacitatis plurimae, etsi scurrilis et sordidae. . . . Reprehendenti filio Tito, quod etiam urinae<sup>1</sup> vectigal commentus esset, pecuniam ex prima pensione admovit ad nares, sciscitans num odore offenderetur; et illo negante: 'Atqui,' inquit, 'e lotio est.'*

The passage is best left untranslated: the moral is clear enough.

One of the indirect consequences of the Budget Inquiry Tribunal and its Report was that no progress could be made for lack of time with Mr. A. P. Herbert's Marriage Bill which he introduced this session. As things turned out, it did not matter much, for in the following session it was adopted by another Member, Mr. de la Bère, who was fortunate in the Ballot, and, as will be recounted later, was carried triumphantly to the Statute Book without any Minister other than the Attorney- or Solicitor-General saying a word for or against it. And the promoters, including myself, made good use of the intervening time

<sup>1</sup> Known in Paris to this day as 'Vespasiennes.'

to proclaim the need and the merits of the reforms which the Bill sought to achieve. In the course of my studies to this end, I found in the Homilies appointed in 1562 to be read in churches a reference to

divorces which nowadays be so commonly accustomed and used by men's private authority, to the great displeasure of God, and the breach of the most holy knot and bond of matrimony.

It refers to loose-living

grown to such a height that in a manner among many it is counted no sin at all but rather a pastime, a dalliance, and but a touch of youth ; not rebuked, but winked at ; not punished, but laughed at.

The Golden Age of episcopal imagination recedes upon investigation into a more distant past, for St. Paul was as censorious as the Bishop of London.

A young Member of Parliament (Mr. C. Taylor) with a nice historical sense, speaking on the Foreign Office vote this month, quoted from *The World Whirlegigge*, by Robert Hayman, who died about 1631 : <sup>1</sup>

Plenty breeds Pride ; Pride, Envy :

Envy, Warre.

Warre, Poverty ; Poverty, humble Care.

Humility breeds Peace and Peace breeds Plenty.

Thus, round the World doth rowle alternately.

But it is far older than that.

It was found in Welsh in *The Myvrian Archaeology of Wales*, and there ascribed to St. Cadoc (sixth century). The translation of the Welsh version is :

Poverty begets Effort ; Effort begets Success ; Success begets Wealth ; Wealth begets Pride ; Pride begets Strife ; Strife begets War ; War begets Poverty ; Poverty begets Peace : Peace born of

<sup>1</sup> It was published in 1625 in *Quodlibets, late come from ' New Britaniola, Old Newfoundland, by R. H., sometime Governor of the Plantation there.'*

Poverty, begets Effort ; Effort again begets Success, and the round continues as before.

There are many other old versions. One of the oldest, said to be derived from a fifteenth-century manuscript, reads :

Peace maketh Plenty, Plenty maketh Pride, Pride maketh Plee [pleasure], Plee maketh Poverty, Poverty maketh Peace.

Our forefathers wasted no time in seeking a ' solution ' of the problem, as though it was a mathematical puzzle that could be solved by the application of the right formula. They murmured '*solvitur ambulando*,' and sought with some success to take the next step along the dark road which their forefathers had trod. They faced the future boldly and without fear ; the civilisation we have inherited from them is not what we wish it to be, but, by whatever test we apply, it is superior to any of its forerunners. What we need to-day is fewer scare headlines, less oratory, and more confidence in ourselves and in human nature.

## CHAPTER XV

JULY 1936

‘ I am of opinion,’ says Montaigne, ‘ that the most honourable calling is to serve the Public and to be useful to the many.’ Where so much is at stake in these days I think we might be a little more generous in our criticisms of those upon whom we place the burden of decisions which we shirk ourselves.

LORD MACMILLAN. *Law and Politics* (1937).

THE sun woke me early one morning and brought me soon after seven to Lambeth Bridge—one of the best view points in London. The number of cyclists coming into town daily has never, so far as I know, been recorded: it must be very large, especially between six and nine o’clock. They are attractive to watch. Mostly young men, only one woman in four or five hundred: expert riders, very fast movers, able to keep up with a bus—and many of them finely built and healthy looking. The bicycle is their reply to the heavy daily cost of getting to work from the new housing estates, often twelve to fifteen miles from the centre.

A few days later I was walking one Sunday afternoon in a remote lane past a group of cyclists when I was hailed with a ‘ Good morning, Sir Arnold ’ from a youth sitting in the hedge with a young lady by his side and a tandem in the ditch. He was a junior waiter in a London Club, and we knew each other’s jobs and ways. I was introduced to his young lady, to the Captain and the Secretary of the Club, and they began to talk. Keen cyclists all, they mostly bicycled to and from their work—all were insured, as members of a Club, against third party



risks and to some extent against personal injury. They observed strict discipline when together and knew the Highway Code by heart—better, they observed, than most motorists. They were keen but not unfriendly critics of the Minister of Transport: on one matter they held strong convictions. The more houses were built in the country, the more popular bicycles would become. Few of them earned over £2 10s. a week. The cycle saved them at least 5s. weekly—and was as sure and as quick as a bus.

They urged on me the need for bicycle sheds in public places—as badly needed as motor parks—for accommodation on the ground floor of bicycles in the new tenements, and, in new housing estates, of a proper shed outside the house for a bicycle, a motor cycle, a pram and the odds and ends that find no place in a house. (The lack of this is a constant complaint against many new housing schemes.) They were a cheerful lot and readily told me what they did for a living. Waiters, kitchen porters, an apprentice printer or two, a laboratory boy, a valet in a group of flats, a postal clerk, a grocer's assistant, a butcher from Smithfield Market, and a dozen other jobs. What variety of life and, therefore, of conversation—and how they talked! Two of the four girls were in offices—two in a factory. Two were married, the others, I gathered, soon to be. They were not genteel, they spoke loudly, though that nowadays is not a mark of insufficient breeding, and were enjoying every moment. They revelled in good scenery and fresh air. They were eager for details of the country round.

They went their way, and I mine, by a footpath over open fallows. The path led to an Elizabethan farmhouse whose owner had written to me a few days earlier.

The treatment of current events in Spain by the Irish contrasts sharply with that of London: the reports given in Dublin and Cork have been as full, and not less

impartial, than those printed in the best London dailies. The English ecclesiastical hierarchy have been silent: no word of protest against the burning of churches, the slaughter of clergy and nuns, in circumstances of unrelieved horror, has escaped their lips. Christian men in England have been asked neither for their prayers nor their sympathy with those of their own faith who have suffered thus in Spain. The Bishop of Chichester, when the persecution in Spain was at its height, was content to write to the Press to draw attention to the dispute between a small group of militant Evangelical Clergy in Germany and the Reich, as if that, and not the tragedy of Spain, was of outstanding importance to Christendom.

The Bishops in Ireland, like the Archbishop of Westminster, were not afraid to take the opposite line, and their feelings were echoed in well-informed letters from very numerous correspondents who voiced, as the British Press has for the most part failed to voice, the deeper feelings of a Christian kingdom, of which Ireland was once an integral part. At such a juncture Christendom should be one and indivisible.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who ordered prayers in all churches for the success of the World Economic Conference, declined to request the clergy to pray for the success of Ottawa on the ground, we may presume, that it was a matter of party politics. A Church whose leaders similarly regard the elimination of Christian institutions from Spain is clearly willing, *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*, and will deservedly lose its hold upon the country which endowed it.

It was my privilege one July afternoon to speak at the City of London School and to present the Beaufoy and Mortimer Prizes for knowledge of Shakespeare and English. It was at this school that H. H. Asquith and his brother, W. W. Asquith, my housemaster at Clifton College, learned how to use the classics, and the English tongue.

They were each masters of both : part of what I said in praise of them is perhaps worthy of recording here :

‘ In the darkest days of the Great War when we were very hard pressed in that portion of the great battle front where I was playing my part, I received from him a letter which I still possess : part of it, which I learned by heart, read as follows :

I believe George Meredith was right years ago in telling his friends ‘ to look at the good future of man with some faith in it, and capacity to regard current phases of history without letting our senses blind and bewilder us.’ I believe Emerson was right, too, years before that, when he said, ‘ We see events forced on us which seem to retard and retrograde the civility of ages. But the world spirit is a strong swimmer and storms and waves cannot drown him. Through the years and the centuries a great and beneficent tendency irresistibly streams.’

‘ I treasured that letter, for it rang true and I knew its worth. William Asquith was frail of body, feeble of health, but able to inspire able-bodied men with his own indomitable spirit. You may well be proud of him. I see no less reason for confidence to-day than he then felt.

‘ I have spent twenty years in the harness of office, during momentous times when Herbert Asquith was Prime Minister. He learned here how to make the best use of his great inborn powers. In December 1911 I was a Vice-Consul in a remote port on the torrid shores of the Persian Gulf. Like all good Consuls abroad I received *The Times*, and daily read one day’s issue five weeks late. The issue of November 9, 1911, contained a speech by Herbert Asquith, then Prime Minister, at the Mansion House, in which he expressed his regret at the retirement of Arthur Balfour from the leadership of the Opposition in words which I never forgot, for I was then, as now, a Conservative—with radical tendencies.

It has been my good fortune [he said], in a public life which

now extends over more than a quarter of a century, to be engaged in continuous and almost ceaseless controversy with Mr. Balfour, and during the past twelve months our encounters have been, perhaps, more frequent and not less uncompromising than ever before. It follows that I know as well as anybody—perhaps better than anybody—the range and reach of his resources, both for attack and defence.

‘Then, recollecting his *Virgil*, he quoted appositely and magnificently that reference to Hector :

. . . experto credite quantus in clipeum adsurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam,

adding, sententiously, “but perhaps I had better not continue the quotation.” I give you the passage from Dryden’s translation :

We met in fight : I know him to my cost,  
With what a whirling force his lance he tossed.

‘The next two lines, which he did not quote, ran thus :

Had Troy produced two more his match in might  
They would have changed the fortune of the fight.

‘I wonder how many persons at the dinner noticed the compliment thus allusively conveyed in an unfamiliar tongue to his opponent.

‘Six years later he was still Prime Minister and I, by the fortune of war, was the chief civil authority in Mesopotamia. There had been a Royal Commission to inquire why things had gone wrong : I had been harassed with inquiries into past happenings : I had respectfully protested that I had no time to give to anything but the tasks of the present and future. The Report was debated in Parliament : Herbert Asquith appealed to the House to look forward, not backward, and he quoted Burke’s speech to the electors of Bristol in 1780 :

We may suffer very great detriment by being open to every talker. It is not to be imagined how much of service is lost from

spirits full of activity and full of energy, who are pressing, who are rushing forward, to great and capital objects when you oblige them to be continually looking back. Whilst they are defending one service, they defraud you of a hundred.

Applaud us when we run : console us when we fall ; cheer us when we recover ; but let us pass on—for God's sake let us pass on.

' I read those words in Hansard, and felt more than ever proud to serve under a man who could so nobly and so generously say what I had so inadequately expressed and so deeply felt.

' We in Parliament,' I went on, ' listen for 30 hours for every hour we talk. Those who decry the arts of persuasive speech—who complain that we discuss matters openly and in public—should ask themselves by what other means agreement should be sought. By writing to each other ? or by physical force ?

' Do not underestimate the importance of speaking good English amongst yourselves or on a public platform. The meaningless cliché, the inapt slogan, the futile, worn-out adjective, betoken a vacant mind, which falls an easy prey to the sophistries of the daily Press. I often hear more good sense, in fewer words, from a ploughboy than from many a man with a good public school education : for some ploughboys think things out for themselves, the " educated " man too often becomes, unconsciously, a mere echo.

' Make up your minds not to be echoes : be chary of expressing opinions upon matters you have not studied, and when you have formed a view, make sure that you say precisely what you mean. Choose your words as your sisters choose their frocks. Keep the door of your lips.

' Plutarch says somewhere that Plato used to put great thoughts into the minds of his young men : they lay there dormant through the wintry storms of youth, to flow forth in the spring of manhood like living fountains from the

breasts of men. This School is to you the Academy of Plato: and you are as those young men.

‘ If you would be worthy of this School, of this great undefended city in the midst of a county to-day governed by a body of men who have refused, directly or indirectly, to co-operate with the Government of this country for the defence of its inhabitants or the training of its citizens, you will do well not merely to recite Shakespeare, but to follow his counsel, and to play a man’s part by joining the Territorial Force or one branch of the Armed Forces of the Crown.’

## CHAPTER XVI

AUGUST 1936

### IN KERRY AGAIN

TEN days *en famille* in Kerry at Castlegregory, at the base of the narrow chain of lofty sandhills which separates the great bays of Brandon and Tralee, served, not to modify, but to heighten the delights of earlier visits. The narrow strip of arable fields which runs for 20 miles between the shore and the blue hills rising to 3000 feet, ending in the sheer cliffs of Brandon Point, is as fertile as when Arthur Young told of it in his *Tour of Ireland*, 150 years ago. Crops are good this year, cattle are fetching better prices, and the demand for bacon is keen. Yet the stream of emigration to England flows unchecked as it did, in Young's day, to Newfoundland and America: almost every household has sons or daughters mostly in London or the Midlands.

In Young's day, and long after, the flow of migrants was ascribed to rack-renting by absentee landlords, and lack of security of tenure. Neither cause operates to-day. Dublin Castle rules no more; Whitehall and Westminster exercise no control; the Irish Free State is mistress of its own destinies. But, from the point of view of the working man, conditions are, at least on the surface, and for the time being, better in England, though food is cheaper in Ireland, with potatoes at  $4\frac{1}{2}d.$  a stone, meat half the English price, and daily necessities and small luxuries like beer and tobacco no dearer. As water

finds its own level, so do Irishmen, who individually feel themselves to be members of the British Empire and citizens of a United Kingdom, tend to go where conditions of life are best. No race is more adaptable, none has done so much to people the waste places of the earth. The men are strong to labour: every English farmer with a beet crop to lift knows at what price and with what speed a gang of Irishmen, sleeping rough and going from farm to farm, can do his harvesting. English contractors often prefer nomad Irish to resident English labour. England is as much the market of Ireland as of South Wales and Scotland. The four countries are fated to live together.

Among the passengers from Fishguard to Cork were some thirty naval ratings from sixteen to nineteen years of age, all in uniform, going on leave. 'How will they like your kit at home in Skibbereen?' I asked one of them. 'There's more that likes to see it than the other sort,' he replied easily. 'A lot of young men at home wish they had gone across with me. I'll serve twelve years and come back with a trade and a bit in the bank; that's what Ireland wants.' He was one of three brothers, one of whom was in the Mediterranean with the Fleet. His father believed in De Valera, his mother did not bother either way. They were Catholics and prayed that the army might win in Spain. He hoped to go on foreign service next year.

Here was one tie. Another was indicated by the cargo I saw unloaded at Fishguard—Irish butter and cattle and, marvellous to relate, churns of milk consigned for manufacturing purposes to a place in Surrey.

A few days later I was in a village on the wildest part of the Kerry coast, exchanging reminiscences of foreign travel with a seventy-year-old fisherman and his crew. They each had a few acres of land on which to grow potatoes, carrots and onions, with some clover and grazing



for the horses and cattle. Some ran a few geese, turkeys or ducks on the common lands. A few grew wheat and beet, thanks to a subsidy on rye and barley. Their only manure was seaweed, which, with its rich iodine content, should surely add value to the crops. It no longer paid to burn kelp for the ash, even when the May weed, which gave the best ash, was coming in. A few years ago they had built, with stone and cement, special places for the burning; but few of them had ever been used, for the Government stopped the subsidy, being unable to compete with iodine and bromine cheaply produced from the Dead Sea and Utah. The change had hit thousands of families all along the west coast of Ireland. But the market for *carragheen* moss was better: it fetched 2s. 6d. a stone this year; it all went to Germany and Belgium, where it was valued, when reduced to a jelly, as a remedy against colds, and as a delicacy. They did not know why the English did not use it. *Slokane*—an edible seaweed (*Fucus saccharifera*), sweet to the taste—was a side-line: it mostly went to America, where its medicinal properties were prized, especially for children of Irish descent. Lobsters and crabs were their best articles of trade, but after October the weather stopped fishing.

Next day a small French boat, fitted with an auxiliary motor, sailed into the bay, and I was sent for to translate in detail the 'statement of account' which it brought of the sales of the last batch of lobsters consigned to a firm in *Les Halles de Paris*: the gross sum received, some 550 francs, was reduced to 250 francs after all expenses had been paid—transport, customs, *octroi*, commission and stamps—which meant that the sender received about 6d. for each lobster. The weather was against them; though the lugger was fitted with a tank, they had arrived dead. A note at the foot of the account promised better prices next time, so they pulled out another twenty dozen lobsters from the wooden tanks lying in the bay and sent them off. The English buyers took a bigger commission

than the French, and paid less, though lobsters were cheaper in far-off Paris than in London. It was well to keep in with two buyers and not give a monopoly to one. The trouble was that French boats came into the bay, not only to buy lobsters, but to poach on grounds that were already fully fished over, and Spanish boats too. So this remote village was selling the harvest of the sea to France, Belgium, Germany and America, but little or none to Dublin or England, and valued their international connexions.

The monthly cattle market was held in the main street on a Monday. There was no auction; a few dealers went from group to group, offering a price and, receiving no word, moved on, to return later to make a better price, which would at last be clinched with a gesture that was more like a slap than a handshake. Prices were better, but 'Dev.'s' economic war hung heavy over all. How long would it go on, I was asked, and should we charge duty on turkeys at 6*d.* a pound next Christmas? Bold speeches a week later at the Galway and Wexford by-election, which favoured 'Dev.,' suggest, as a farmer put it to me, that if the Irish are changing their minds, the President is changing his too, and even faster.

August 15 was our 'Pattern Day'—'Saint Mary of the Warren,' the patronal festival of the Magharees ('the sand hills'), home of rabbits and hares. A few gypsies came from Puck Fair, held from time immemorial on August 11 at Killorglin, where a goat, garlanded and well fed, is set up on a stand 40 feet high to preside, being, as one man explained, the only animal that has the patience and dignity to do the honours of the fair for three days. 'The strongest man in the British Isles'—those were his exact words—balanced his own bicycle on his head, a borrowed cartwheel on the palm of his hand, and lay on a board studded with nails, allowing his assistant to jump on his hirsute chest.

But before all this began Mass was said in a crowded church, whilst men knelt on the steps at the open door. As the sacring bell rang, all in the street bared their heads, and many, silent for a moment in shops and at the booths, crossed themselves. Presently the parish priest came out to spend half an hour with his parishioners. By mid-day the village street was full: the swings, at half English prices, in great demand. John Duffy junior's Talkie Coliseum Cinema (entrance 4d.) drew many behind the screen in the open air. A strolling flautist and a violinist at one end of the street, and an accordion-player at the other, played for what few pennies the audience cared to give. I spun a coin with an old man to decide who should pay at a booth: 'the lady,' he cried, not 'heads'; I had not heard that since army days in India thirty odd years ago. At nine o'clock dancing began (entrance 3s. to keep it select). The *shebeens* were full of men, and of song; the *garda* (police) walked slowly up and down, but found nothing to require attention. There was much courting—many couples arm in arm—but none of the lively squeals which on such a night in England show that someone is making someone else happy. Men and women alike spoke in soft tones. In the far distance a lighthouse flashed. The stars shone, reflected brightly in the lough close by; a flock of starlings, startled by fishermen in quest of sea-trout, fluttered noisily. At 10.30 the doors of the taverns closed: at 11 the last occupant had left. The *garda* passed slowly by, to see that the law was being kept. The doctor turned to say good-night: the trim, well-stocked shops remained open till midnight. Then silence till 4 o'clock, when couples began to leave the halls to walk or ride home. The sun rose over Tralee as brightly as it had set over Brandon. 'Pattern Day' was over, and a few hours later men and women were assembling for Mass at the cross, erected close to the church to the memory of men slain nearby during the last 'troubles.'

Between Cork, one of the most beautiful harbours in Europe, and Fishguard, I had some talk over the taffrail with an American returning from a visit to the land of his birth. Himself a farmer as well as an industrialist, he thought that Ireland needed good farming and small industries, and that to this extent a protective policy was right, but not the economic war. He saw with alarm the falling birth rate and the stream of migrants. The best young men and women tended to leave: that had gone on for a century, and the effect was visible. It cost at least £1000 in food, clothes and services to produce a young person of eighteen. Ireland was exporting its most valuable natural product at the rate of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 a year, for the Irish Free State land was under-peopled; worse still, it was losing potential leaders. *Caelum non animus mutant qui trans mare currunt* was not true. Men did change when they crossed deep waters, and if they returned could not adapt themselves to the conditions they had left. But we agreed that there was still in Ireland a great reservoir of good men and women who, if they could accept a life of simplicity and relative poverty, would be far happier there than in London, Liverpool, or Chicago or New York: the spiritual awakening which he thought he had seen in some European countries had not reached Ireland. He had met courtesy, good temper, and good nature everywhere, but the desire to migrate was not a good sign. The young men were restless, *tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore*, like the shades beyond the Styx in the Sixth Aeneid.

On August 19, in the small hours of the morning, the *Innisfallen* disgorged at Fishguard a full cargo of third-class passengers and cattle in about equal numbers. The cattle were lucky, for food awaited them: when I visited the tiny station buffet at 5 o'clock in search of victuals, I found everything sold out. The ship had brought more passengers than usual, explained the tired young woman:

the Traffic Department did not advise them how many to expect. Breakfast (at 3s. 6d.) could be had on the train. The hundreds of persons who could not afford to spend so much would have to wait till they reached London.

My American friend was censorious; third-class passengers were better treated in this matter on the Continent: we in England made things comfortable for the fairly well-to-do, and ignored the rest. Why was nothing but 'trash,' as a young sailor termed it, left? He wanted a few slices of bread and butter, a 'hot-dog,' or a meat-pie. He was offered chocolate or (for 4d.) a cold boiled egg.

I returned to the welter of London and, if the daily Press is evidence of public opinion, to the 'absolute confusion of thought,' of which, in another sphere, the Dean of St. Paul's recently spoke so truly. Whilst the Government is pressing for a policy of neutrality towards the parties in Spain, the spirit of partisanship is being very actively fostered by a section of the daily Press, of which the following from the *News Chronicle* of August 11 is a fair sample:

Barcelona is a proud city to-day. Rising out of the ashes of its night of fire is a belief that it has made history and that Spain has once more given something to humanity. With every church destroyed, and much of its glorious art blotted out, this may be hard to understand, until we realise that on July 19 a military revolt planned for months and materially supported by the Fascist International was crushed by the poorly armed workers side by side with the sort of people who in England are reading these words in tubes and buses during the rush-hour.

Comment is needless, except perhaps to speculate as to the names and addresses of those who direct the 'Fascist International.' The *Daily Mail*, on the other side, reported on August 12 under captions 'Patriots Restore Order: Siesta Again,' that 'at Barcelona another Government has been set up, taking no orders from Madrid.'

It is not surprising that recruiting is at its lowest ebb in London, where these papers are most widely read. Never, even in August 1914, was there a more general support in Great Britain for isolation; but it is not yet realised that such a policy, if it is to succeed, requires an overwhelming backing of armed force.

Those who would understand the spirit which animates both sides in Spain would do well to remember with what ferocity the Spanish-speaking countries of Paraguay and Bolivia, with a common tongue and a common history, were recently fighting.

Let us not scoff, nor speak with scorn of either side. Let us rather weep with Wellington at this latest proof of the inhumanity of man to man.

The decision of the European Concert not to intervene in Spain is doubtless prudent, but it is a policy of negation. It assumes that intervention must be in the interest of one side or the other and that it must divide Europe into armed camps. Neither of these assumptions is self-evident. Four Powers intervened on the outbreak of war between Greece and Turkey, with complete success, in 1897. They garrisoned Crete and kept troops there till 1906; and there are many other examples of honourable and disinterested intervention in recent history, such as that of the French in Syria in 1860.

Public opinion on both wings in this country is horrified at the carnage in Spain. Their feelings are in no way reflected by the prudent silence of the bishops and the Free Churches, generally so ready to declare themselves upon such issues. But most Englishmen desire to maintain an attitude of impartiality, though not necessarily of detachment. Their sentiments are those expressed by Virgil in his Eighth Eclogue:

*saevus Amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem  
commaculare manus: crudelis tu quoque, mater.*

crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille ?  
improbus ille puer : crudelis tu quoque, mater.

which has been beautifully translated by an anonymous author as follows :

Fierce love has made a mother stain her hands  
With her own children's blood—fierce mother too  
Was she more cruel, or the boy more vile ?  
A cruel mother, and an impious boy.

## CHAPTER XVII

SEPTEMBER 1936

Er ist niemals gestorben,  
Er hat hinabgenommen  
Der Reiches Herrlichkeit  
Und wird einst wiederkommen  
Mit ihr zu seiner Zeit.

FR. RÜCKERT. *Barbarossa.*

THE first question that a visitor to one great country from another is apt to ask himself to-day is what is there to fear and, less often, what to learn? A week spent this month at Nuremberg during the annual Party Congress afforded all comers a variety of replies. It was my seventh visit in three years, during which I have watched the tree which I saw sprouting in 1933 grow quickly, in almost precisely the form intended by those who planted it: it has begun to flower, and will soon bear fruit which, at least so long as it is unripe, will be bitter to the taste of an older generation.

To outward seeming the new Germany is more prosperous than that of 1928-1932. The figures of public health, and of crime, are enviable; the death rate in infancy and adolescence has dropped quickly, and is well below ours; there is less tuberculosis and other diseases than at any previous time; the courts have never had so little to do: the prisons were never emptier. The physical well-being of the nation's youth is a pleasure to see: the poorest are better dressed than of old: their faces bear witness to a psychological change for the better.



I could not say that of the masses in Paris and Strasburg, where I spent some time on my way to Germany.

There is something like a boom in internal trade, quite apart from rearmament, and unemployment has reached a figure which Sir William Beveridge would probably regard as a low water mark. Can it last? No one knows: everyone realises that the question is one to ask: many believe that a well-disciplined and organised State can remain largely immune from financial depressions originating in other lands: others hold that all that is possible on these lines has already been done, and that more international trade is essential to further progress. A few believe that the State should take further control of banking, and issue an internal currency, distinct from that used in international transactions. I heard all these views expressed. The conflict between Right and Left wing policies is still being waged within the party, by experts, behind closed doors, not in public. But Dr. Schacht, under the wing of General Goering, is still in the saddle; and is slow to countenance adventures.

The German Reich is young; as a political entity it has not yet attained its seventieth birthday; its component kingdoms have monopolised the patriotism and the enterprise which in Britain has for three centuries been at the disposal of the King's Government.

Unlike Italy, it has no single religious organisation to which the people or the secular rulers can turn: unlike us, it has no State Church. The differences between the component parts were until recently as sharp as those which divide the Southern from the Northern Irish and from us, and the Welsh from Londoners. The Army and Navy alone had, until the advent of National Socialism, a universal appeal: the Fighting Services are in Germany so closely interwoven with the fabric of national life that they are rightly regarded, with the Public Works Service Camps, as part of the educational and social services of the nation.

At all these points the British and German outlooks are divergent, and the same is true of finance. The strength of British finance is less in its organisation than in the diversity of channels through which it operates. British Industrial Assurance works through privately managed offices which hold between them some £350 millions of funds belonging to policy-holders and collect some £70 millions a year by way of premiums. In Germany this is done by the State, whose finances are correspondingly strengthened. The investments of German Universities are in the hands of the State, in England of independent Trustees or Governing Bodies. The same is true of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of associations which in England function independently of her and in Germany are an integral part of the State. Unity in financial policy has been achieved, more fully than in any other department of life, with the assent of the German people, who are content to hold that money is confidence. Confidence means faith in themselves and their leaders. To renew that faith, and to give expression to it, is the object of the annual Party Congress at Nuremberg, attended by a quarter of a million pilgrims and as many official participants, including the Hitler Youth, of either sex, representatives of German womanhood from every part of the Reich, in traditional costume, the Public Works Service Corps, the S.A. and S.S., brown and black clad special constabulary, and detachments of Army, Navy and Air Force from every branch. Each group of forty or fifty thousand persons assembles in turn in great buildings or in one of the several magnificent stadiums, specially erected for the purpose, to hear the Führer, Herr Hitler, and one or more of his principal Ministers, and to derive mutual encouragement from the imposing spectacles of which they are an integral part. The foreign visitor, to quote Horace (*Ep.* ii. 1),

Would eye the mob more keenly than the shows,  
And find less food for thought in these than those.

Public attention abroad is, inevitably, focussed upon the principal speeches delivered, and upon descriptions of the military displays, recorded by foreign correspondents with an eye to high lights and with little space and scant sympathy for other aspects. Some, indeed, resemble that ingenious machine which records upon a paper scroll, and exaggerates, as a car moves over the road, every furrow crossed and every jolt received, regardless of the direction and speed of the vehicle.

I was at pains to spend more time among 'the mob,' the *mobile vulgus*, so feared by our forefathers, than in the grand stands. Their attitude and outlook were not unlike those of our own people at the Jubilee celebrations, with this difference, that the younger generation were far more enthusiastic, the older men and women less so. Germany is a country where consideration of and hope for youth predominates over compassion and care for elderly folk who have had their day. There are for them, as for us, meagre pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits and provision for honourable burial: the shame of the pauper funeral, ever present to the British working classes,<sup>1</sup> is unknown to them. But the National Socialist Party appeals to and is largely managed by and for youth. The fact accounts for many things which give an unfavourable impression to the foreign observer.

The National Socialist movement is complex: it has its bad as well as its finer aspects, of which the Public Works Service Camps, with the *Wintershilfswerk* or National Voluntary Winter Relief System, are perhaps the most notable. Both are something we might adopt and adapt to our own needs.

Whatever direction German policy may take, this movement, which has a strong distaff side, and the junior organisation of Hitler Youth, will remain; their value transcends, perhaps, that associated with any other organised bodies in the new Germany, and may fairly

<sup>1</sup> One person in eleven who dies in Greater London is buried as a pauper at the cost of the rates.

be called spiritual, for they are the outcome of the spiritual, and not of the material, aims of the people.

After a week spent at Nuremberg, in touch with observers of many nations, witnessing every parade in turn, I will attempt to describe only in detail that of 43,000 men of the *Arbeitsdienst*, Public Works Service Corps, on September 10. It was the first of the series, as that of the Army was the last. All alike were spectacular: each was perfectly staged and faultlessly executed, with the precision not of a machine but of a living creature. Each was marked by scenes of emotional enthusiasm, of endurance and of sustained patriotic fervour, such as I have not witnessed elsewhere. Whatever opposition may exist underground apparently causes little anxiety, for the Chancellor, standing erect, day after day, in a slow-moving car in narrow streets between seven-storey houses whence the poorest in the land watched him from their own windows, was running risks which few of the world's rulers, other than our own King, would care to take.

The parade of the Public Works Service Corps, representing nearly a million men, some in tented camps but nearly all in permanent barracks scattered all over Germany, merits special attention because it stands for a wholly new ideal, now an integral part of German life. It existed in embryo before the Revolution, the leaders of which saw in it the seeds of a movement wholly consonant with their aims. It grew very rapidly and has not been affected, as some expected, by the adoption of universal military service.

The ceremony opened with a march past which would have done credit to any regular army: the drill to the order of one man, his voice amplified by a hundred loud-speakers, was as good: the bands reached a high standard.

Each detachment or *Trupp* passed the saluting post headed by banners and the bell-tree or *Stellenbaum*, a defiant military emblem which includes the eagle, the

horse-hair tuft and horns—from which small bells hang:<sup>1</sup> to it the spectators rose, as to the regimental colours in other lands. But these things were overshadowed as the parade reached its climax and the whole force entered the ground as a series of battalions in line formation, their burnished spades, the only weapon carried, flashing in the sun as they turned.

The stadium or arena was a square each side of which was some 300 yards long: the tiers of seats on the four sides gave seating space for nearly 75,000 spectators and 250,000 men can stand in the arena. There 43,000 men seemed but a handful. On the following night we saw 100,000 men there and there was no feeling of overcrowding. Orders were given from the saluting point by a single man whose voice, transmitted by scores of loud-speakers, made it possible for him to control the whole mass, which moved as one man, extorting from the vast crowd an audible gasp of admiration.

In the middle of the front line was a cenotaph; in front of it stood one of the forty-three bands: around it were massed some five hundred young men, destined next year to be leaders, and specially trained to this end. Bare to the waist, and hatless, they carried only a spade.

Then began a memorial ceremony and service of dedication, akin to the Christian rite of Confirmation, so simple, so solemn, so moving, and so sincere as to merit, better than many customary religious rites, the title of worship. The silvery note of trumpets brought the silent and reverent multitude of 70,000 spectators to their feet. A hundred flags dipped. Then followed the Order of Service: sentences, spoken by one man, were followed by responses, uttered sometimes by the five hundred leaders, sometimes by every man on parade.

The rite occupied some fifteen minutes, and it had not been previously rehearsed as a whole: the leaders knew it by heart, for they carried no paper in hand. I

<sup>1</sup> The British Army once possessed this emblem which was known to the troops as 'tinkle-johnny.'

have tried to reproduce, in the following translation of part of the ceremony, the spirit of the original, which was also in verse.

[*Fanfare of Trumpets: Flags are waved.*]

*Chorus of Male Voices:*

Dear to our hearts is the land of our birth,  
 For the State is us all  
 And we are a wall  
 Surrounding the Nation  
 Protecting its freedom  
 With heart and with hand.

*The whole Corps:*

Now is the hour when we men who labour,  
 With spades that shine brightly  
 And flags that fly proudly  
 With eyes that are clear  
 And hearts without fear  
 Come forth to the nation and march past our Leader.

*One Voice:*

Once in the year spades must rest for a day,  
 Once in the year comes the time when we may  
 Come forth to the Leader to whom we are true,  
 And in this great hour our faith plight anew.

*The whole Corps:*

**We are ready.**

*Chorus:*

The writers and smiths  
 Stand shoulder to shoulder  
 With ploughboy and joiner,  
 Alike in their habit  
 Of dress and of work,  
 They stand in the ranks,  
 No labour to shirk.  
 No longer divided by class or by station,  
 The spade has united us all as a nation.

*Chorus :*

All honour to the hoe,  
By which the crops shall grow.  
All honour to our camp,  
Set among marshes rank  
Where once no corn would grow,  
To-morrow we will sow.  
Uplands will laugh and sing  
Which once no food would bring.  
Our camps throughout the land  
Like watch towers shall stand.  
The faith our spades proclaim  
Firm-rooted shall remain.  
The love we bear the State  
Shall bury deep all hate.

*One Voice :*

We of the Ems reclaim waste land,  
By wind and sun our bodies tanned.

*Another :*

Standing knee deep in weed and slime,  
Soaked to the skin, we tame the Rhine.

*A third :*

And icy streams from Bayern's peaks  
Wreck in an hour the work of weeks.

*A fourth :*

Wet are our clothes and cruel the cold.  
Scarcely a spade can our numbed fingers hold.

*Chorus :*

Yet still with heads erect with pride  
We look back to our comrades who early death defied,  
Those German youths, a glorious band,  
Feared not to die for their dear land.

*All :*

**F**or which we live, for which we strive.

[*A roll of drums. Standards are dipped. Four wreaths are placed on the cenotaph. All heads are bowed.*]

*Chorus :*

A hero's wreath for those who fell in fields of war and strife,  
A martyr's wreath for those who died when civil feuds were rife.  
Lift up the wreaths! And raise two more for them  
Whom sickness took or died at work like men.

While we have life their names we'll cherish,  
Never shall their memory perish.  
Our turn to go too may be near,  
We'll march to meet death without fear.  
For death must come to all,  
But still our banners tall  
Shall wave to heaven above.

*One Voice :*

The Cross aloft doth mark  
The road to freedom dark.  
The shadow it doth throw  
On mortal men below  
Shows that the sun on high  
Shines now on Germany.

*One Voice :*

This is our two-fold law  
With every breath we draw  
Our land and homes our children shall inherit  
We by our work their gratitude shall merit.  
Thus shall we do, and thus by Germans led  
In honour die, striving for work and bread,  
Leaving the earth our forefathers have made  
The better for our toil, and for the spade.

*The Chorus :*

O Leader, we are workers true,  
We dedicate our life anew,  
To serve the Fatherland, and you.



All: ~~We~~ swear it.

*All in unison sing the fireside song of the camps :*

God, bless the work which we've begun !  
God, bless our Leader and the course we run !  
Stand by our side, O God, to bless our toil !  
With all our strength enriching German soil !  
God, bless our task ! God, bless the spade !  
Which turns to wealth what Thou hast made,  
That every stroke of spade may be  
A fruitful prayer for Germany.

I watched the earnest faces of the audience as they listened, and of the men as they sang. If this is propaganda, it is for peace, and it is for German ears, and not ours, for no translation has been published and even the German version is not easily obtainable. It is not akin to our National Anthem, *Rule Britannia* or *Deutschland über alles*. It is as near pacifism as any normal man can get. The last verses are known throughout all Germany by every youth who has passed through the camps. Mr. Shane Leslie once observed that whichever political party in England can write a popular ballad can win a General Election. Could any party 'put across' such a cantata as this?

The ceremony would have satisfied the early saints, who held that *Laborare est orare*: it is in the tradition of the *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* of Erasmus, of Kipling's *Recessional*, and of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice's hymn, *I vow to thee, my Country*. If we cannot understand and value it we are the poorer thereby.

I was not surprised to hear Herr Hitler begin his speech with the words 'I find it hard, at such a moment, to address you.' I heard him speak five times that week; he never had a note in his hand.

No people in our lifetime—none perhaps since the days of the Antonines—have so revered their ruler as do

the people of Germany to-day. Compared with them, Italians are lukewarm in their attachment to Fascism, or, at least, in the public expression of their beliefs. Herr Hitler's hold on the people is such that whoever he may nominate to be his successor on his demise will be accepted without question by the rank and file who have come under his influence, and his testament, if he leaves any, will for a generation be a decisive influence on national life. That is not true of most of his Ministers.

I can think of but one parallel: that of Alexander, whose army mutinied at Babylon for one more look at their idol and filed in silence before the dying King, speechless but able to look recognition and raise a hand when a well-remembered face went by. It absolves the historian Arrian from many sins that, without a word of rhetorical declamation on such a theme, he has only repeated the simple story of the last hours at the age of thirty-two of the conqueror—at incredibly small loss of life—of half Asia.

On the following Sunday there was a further parade, 100,000 strong, of auxiliary forces before the Führer. The climax was the service of remembrance; as it began the red banners of various units slowly filed out of the arena in thin streams by a hundred channels.

Then followed the tribute of the living to the dead, and the re-dedication of all present to the cause for which their comrades had died. The Leader, watched by some 200,000 persons, walked some 300 yards to the cenotaph, where, in deepest silence, he invoked the living, by the memory of the dead, to be worthy of their land and race.

He walked slowly back. What followed was designed to symbolise 'the miracle' of which he spoke a few minutes later. The banners came back to the arena, not in thin streams but in broad rivers which, passing up the centre of the great mass, flowed past and round the memorial, up to and round him and, to the sound of

music as full of life as it had been of death at their leaving, brought fresh life to the whole body.

*Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus  
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.*

A hymn followed to Haydn's tune of 1797, which we in England sing to Hymn 292 (A. and M.), and an organ recital, relayed from a church.

Such ceremonies have a universal appeal; this description may perhaps serve to explain a side of modern Germany which probably flows deeper and stronger beneath the surface than others of which we see and hear more.

Reading accounts in the British daily and weekly newspapers of this and other ceremonies, I was struck at what seemed to me the almost scornful cynicism of some, and nervous apprehension of other writers. Some special correspondents of great daily papers were at pains to belittle what they had witnessed, to ascribe it to incurable turpitude, impenitent militarism, or indomitable pride, or to concentrate on side issues. Herr Hitler's final speech was made light of because it contained no surprises for Europe; but it included much to hearten Germany.

My comrades . . . the labour of four years . . . the struggle for success . . . the finest achievement of all is that the German people is now an organised and serried whole. . . . Of the men of this country it can now be said that they are virile, brave and honourable. . . . We are together, I am with you, and ye are with me. . . . We wish to live in peace, to labour, to provide for our posterity; and no enemy, least of all Bolshevism, will be able with impunity to hinder us in this aim. . . . These banners will blow out through the centuries, across the generations, a witness to a new Germany, an emblem of the German people, who found itself again under them. . . .

Defeat came upon us because we did not merit success. But

now—we have achieved great results in every department of the nation's life—by our own strength—in no case have we had to draw upon the help of the Jews.

I had met Herr Hitler twice previously: and when I was brought up to him for a few minutes at a small private reception he appeared to recognise me at once and referred to what had passed at our last conversation. He had just met Mr. Lloyd George, for whom he expressed a profound respect, which, I have since learned, was mutual. They had spent many hours together at Berchtesgaden; it was to both men a memorable event.

Events in Spain had not yet cast a fresh shadow over international relations: a black-uniformed S.S. man with whom I talked in a beer-house was anxious for news of his Spanish friends there. He feared that most of the nobility and middle class in Madrid had been murdered—as proved to be the case: he wanted to go out to their aid: he talked Spanish like a Spaniard, he told me, for he had been out there on engineering contracts. There was as yet no suggestion that 'volunteers' would be despatched, but it was clear that they would be forthcoming as readily as when, in 1919, Mr. Churchill asked for volunteers to intervene in favour of General Denikin and General Wrangel against Bolsheviki in Russia.

I returned to England by air in time to give an address to the British Association at Blackpool on an educational topic. On the previous day its proceedings had been inaugurated by Sir Josiah Stamp. I read his Presidential Address:

Past presidents had pointed out the need for a readjustment not only of scientific but even 'of ethical values.' In his own belief 'opportunistic treatment' of problems, 'a hit-and-miss process of personal adaptation,' must give way to national foresight, to more extensive governmental control. Governments must become 'more fearless, far-sighted and flexible.' 'Enormous potentialities'

come to nought owing to 'improvident tardiness'; if they are to be realised, society must acquire 'a mentality adjusted for change.' 'A benevolent dictator,' with the resources made available by modern science, could 'at a relatively small expense' work wonders of social betterment. 'The analysis of society' offered by economics a quarter of a century ago 'was no longer adequate, for its basic postulates were being rapidly changed.' More, 'the whole body of ethics needs to be reworked in the light of modern corporate relations, from Church and company to cadet corps and the League of Nations.'

Sir Josiah has much more in common with National Socialists than one might be led to expect from his occupation or antecedents—they are working on the lines he indicates. The work of revaluation from Church and League of Nations to the public utility company and the Hitler *Jugend* is proceeding apace under a benevolent dictator which contrasts strangely with our improvident tardiness.

I express no opinion as to whether we can do likewise: I trust that we shall in no case adopt for ourselves methods which many Germans find congenial, but I am convinced that we should move far faster than at present along the path which may lead to a better distribution of the national income not by heavy income taxes or death duties but by insuring the working classes, in the most economical manner possible, against the worst and most calamitous contingencies of life, by promoting positive health and recreation, and by eliminating waste wherever possible. Such a programme will demand the efforts of a generation to accomplish.

## CHAPTER XVIII

OCTOBER 1936

No treachery ; but want of men and money.  
Amongst the soldiers this is muttered—  
That here you maintain several factions ;  
And, whilst a field should be despatch'd and fought,  
You are disputing of your generals.  
One would have lingering wars, with little cost ;  
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings ;  
A third man thinks, without expense at all,  
By guileful fair words peace may be obtain'd.  
Awake, awake, English nobility !  
Let not sloth dim your honours new-begot :  
Cropp'd are the flower-de-luces in your arms ;  
Of England's coat one half is cut away.

SHAKESPEARE. *Henry VI*, Part I, 1 (i).

THE present need for strengthening the armed forces of the Crown is now accepted by the principal political parties in Parliament. The negligence displayed in this matter by the leaders is blameworthy in proportion to the number of their years in office in the past decade, but it was the reflection of the spirit of the country at large, which is popularly supposed to look for enlightenment to the older universities. Twelve years ago Mr. Baldwin thus described the duty of statesmen in this connexion :

Our work is more the work of the gardener than of the builder and architect. . . . We must remove noxious weeds, we must do the root pruning, we must prepare and enrich the soil. But we

have to wait in faith for what comes later, and that is the flowers and fruit ; . . . we can never hope to gather grapes from thistles.<sup>1</sup>

This year saw the appointment, by the Prime Minister, to the Royal Chair of Greek at Oxford of one who during the war was a ' conscientious objector,' and still professes the same creed, and of a foreigner as Corpus Christi Professor of Latin. Both are distinguished scholars: the former a man of great personal charm, whose views command respect among those who differ most strongly from him. But classical professors have responsibilities to whom they teach which transcend the subjects with which they deal. Such appointments—and they are not unique—are ill-calculated to enrich the soil for the younger generation (the *ultimi Britanni*) to help them, in Mr. Baldwin's noble words, ' to base their lives on the stern virtues of the Roman character and to take to ourselves the warnings that Rome left for our guidance.'<sup>2</sup> It is well known that the Treasury circular of 1929, which allows time spent in prison by conscientious objectors to count for pensions, is still in force ; it is common knowledge that time spent abroad in the service of Government or of commerce, or in the armed forces, has long ceased in practice to be recognised by most public bodies and by commercial firms as constituting a preferential claim to consideration. What is less generally recognised is that local authorities, public bodies, and heads of firms tend in such matters to accept inspiration from above: such guidance as they have had in recent years has been almost entirely negative. If public authorities, public utility companies with statutory privileges, and companies holding large contracts from Government were required (1) to be on the King's Roll, (2) to give preference to men who had served with the Colours, and (3) to give leave additional to a holiday with pay to those on their

<sup>1</sup> November 28, 1924, *On England*, 1926, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> January 8, 1926, p. 108, *ibid.*

staffs who belonged to the Territorial Army, most of our recruiting difficulties would vanish.

Our Regular and Territorial forces can be maintained to-day on a voluntary basis only with the active co-operation and good will of employers, large and small, and that, to-day, is almost wholly lacking, especially in London, which, alike for the Territorial and the Regular Army<sup>1</sup> and for the Supplementary Reserve, has a worse record for recruiting than any city in Britain. Co-operation in these matters is possible to achieve only if it is consciously sought by those in authority. Recruiting speeches delivered in Paris by Mr. Duff Cooper and Mr. Churchill do not help.

Sir Thomas Inskip, the Prime Minister's right-hand man, said on September 5 at Rothesay :

There are signs of an attempt to intensify this conspiracy against the liberties of this country. The attempt is not only to usurp the trade unions, but to hamstring the Government in their munitions programme.

He is thus answered by Sir Samuel Hoare :

We fought and defeated Communism by prosperity. Trade recovery, and steady growth of employment, the constantly rising standard of health, housing and comfort, is our answer to Communism.

Our very modest achievements in these directions have had no appreciable effect upon the position in the depressed areas except Tyneside. There are more persons on poor relief than in 1931. Over 1·1 million males from ages sixteen to sixty-four are wholly unemployed. There are complaints of ill-feeding from South Wales, while at Milford Haven, 100 miles from Cardiff, herrings, surplus to the needs of the Midlands, were being virtually given away a few weeks ago because the Welsh boroughs do not take kindly to fish. Sir

<sup>1</sup> Report on the Army, 1935 (Cmd. 5104).



Samuel Hoare's confidence is no answer to Communism, which must be approached not only on the material but on the psychological plane, to which no Minister of the Crown has for many months past attempted to rise.

We rightly regard a 'free' Press as one of our national assets; but its value depends upon the observance of certain canons of taste, particularly in references to foreigners, who are apt to invest old-established journals with a greater authority than would be claimed by any editor or individual contributor. Here are two examples, culled almost at random, from casual reading.

*Punch* of October 7 contained a contributed article, entitled 'An Arab Calendar,' which, doubtless humorously, ascribed to the Palestinian Arab every sort of meanness in his conduct towards his neighbour and to Government officials, and several sorts of crime. In ordinary circumstances it would be harmless; but, at this juncture, when feelings run high, it prompts the query, 'Would the editor have accepted an equally humorous "Zionist Calendar," ascribing similar unlovely traits to what we must, unfortunately, describe for the moment as "the other side"?'

The *Daily Telegraph* of October 14—under the captions 'How Tank Corps made History in Palestine. Epic All-Night Defence'—describes an encounter between three tanks and an aeroplane and a band of Arabs, estimated at more than fifty, as 'one of the historic episodes in the annals of the Army, and a glorious page in the records of the Royal Tank Corps.' The Arabs, 'screaming like maniacs' and 'obviously fanatic,' came on fearlessly right up to the tanks, which were 'an easy target,' and were repulsed—one man killed. There was no lack of courage on either side, and to dismiss Arab valiance as fanatical is misleading and unfair. The Arab strike, which has lasted as many months as our General

Strike lasted days, is now over, but the problem which the Royal Commission has to face is far more intractable now than when the decision to despatch it was announced in July. To this fact every official in the Palestine Government whom I have met bears witness. We entered Palestine eighteen years ago and were welcomed as saviours: the 'fanatical' Arab, in his unequal contest with our war machines, part of a force as large as we sent to India in the dark days of 1856, is a portent and warning to us which we ignore at our peril.

On my way from Euston to speak at Manchester I found myself in the company of three sailors, all from Chatham. The oldest, with eleven years' service to his credit, was of Blackpool; the others, able-seamen of one year's standing, were respectively from Preston and Fallowfield. They were taking ten days' leave before departing for the West Indies station. The older man was telling the younger how lucky they were to go to such a good station straightaway: his lot had been cast in less-favoured climates—the China and India stations. He produced for our inspection photographs taken by himself of a score of places. He was a leading stoker: he could be sure of a good job in civil life when he left the Navy, but was tempted to extend his service to twenty-one years. He would leave the service with £1 a week for life and a sure job. He had already saved enough to buy the house his parents lived in—'not one of those artistic shacks miles away from anywhere, all tiles and plaster and glass and paint, which cost a lot to keep up, but a nice little six-roomed house in a good back street.' The young pair were almost speechless at first, but soon joined in. They wanted to be clear of Chatham. Barrack life was bad for sailors: they were glad they had joined the Navy; it would be good to see the world.

The eldest sailor produced a pack of cards and suggested a game. My conscience as a J.P. smote me:

for a railway-carriage is a place to which the public are permitted to have access. Cards are mentioned in the Vagrancy Act of 1824, as amended in 1873, and many thousands of common (but not first-class) persons are prosecuted thereunder every year by a vigilant police. However, after reminding them, to their astonishment, that we were each liable to be dealt with as rogues and vagabonds and fined £2 each for the first and £5 for further offences, I took a hand, and lost a shilling in the course of an hour's play.

Then I called for a glass of light beer all round, to be served in the compartment, as the restaurant-car was full of tea-drinkers. This was another breach of the law, for, as the Licensing Commission emphasised, and Mr. A. P. Herbert has been at pains to remind us in his latest book,<sup>1</sup> the excise licence does not cover anything but the restaurant-car. Worse still, we should be drinking in a train at an hour when no man could buy a drink outside it.

However, we boldly broke yet another of our precious laws which 'lack of parliamentary time'—and courage, allows to remain—objects of derision to the public and of wonderment to foreign visitors.

I returned to London by the midnight train: armed with two pillows, I found a vacant carriage. Just before the train started a young man entered. I gave him one pillow and he commenced to talk. Life was good these days. He was a very junior engineer, aged twenty-three, with seven years in the same firm, on his way to inspect machinery which his firm had installed at East Ham. He had left his secondary school at sixteen. His ambition was to be a draughtsman, but when his father died he had to take a job to keep a roof over his mother's head, for the other son was married; he had no sisters.

He was as well dressed as any city clerk: only his hands betrayed him as a manual worker. I remarked on

<sup>1</sup> *Mild and Bitter*, by A. P. Herbert (Methuen).

this. He was glad I had noticed it ; it was his pride to dress as decently as anyone else ; perhaps it was the tradition of his secondary school that made him want to. Anyway, he did not see why people who worked with tools should appear in public less well-dressed than those who could use nothing but a pen.

He was fond of dancing : he wore a gold ring on his third finger—9-carat, he explained ; a girl had given it him. It was not his fault that he did not go with her now, but he kept it for memory's sake. What was the greatest day of his life ? When he was made captain of the works football team. He owed the honour to favouritism on the part of his mates, not his merits as a player, but he was proud that they wanted him. He had kept the leadership of the team for three years, though they had ' not done so well '—as the fixture card for last year, which he showed me, proved—but they had good games, and they played a lot of ' away ' matches. The firm helped in that : the partners often watched the games and sometimes ' stood in on ' a bit of a feast and a visit to the theatre for both teams.

We slept soundly till we were turned out at Euston. I suggested a cup of tea and we went to the gloomy waiting-room. It was crowded—not a seat to be had : two youths were busy handing out cups of tea and biscuits—there was nothing else. He insisted on bringing and paying for the tea : with it he courteously brought a packet of cigarettes which he presented to me ; so that we might be square on the journey, as I had paid for his pillow.

Leaving town by train one evening, I found myself in a crowded carriage opposite a young man, hatless, wearing a mackintosh and light flannel trousers. By his side was an attaché case. He was tall, finely built, good-looking, with the high cheek bones and fair skin which, for some reason or other, we associate with ' Colonials.' His hands were clean and strong. I made up my mind that

he was an undergraduate in his third year on his way to Cambridge. When he had finished his evening paper, I borrowed it, offering him Trevelyan's *Blenheim*—the first volume of the trilogy—which I was reading, having secured the three volumes in the new cheap edition at 10s. 6d. each. He accepted it with an easy smile of thanks, without speaking, and began to read it with growing interest, never lifting his eyes from the page. He must, I thought, be reading history thus to immerse himself in the book.

Presently he closed it and handed it back to me. 'I must read no more,' he said, 'or I'll want to have it for keeps': his accent contrasted sharply with his appearance. I asked him what his job in London was. He was a cabinet-maker, he said, just out of his apprenticeship. Trade was good now, and the firm, which only turned out first-class work, had a full order-book. He left his home, forty miles out of London, daily at 6 and returned at 7.30, except on Saturdays. He loved the country; 'and reading?' I asked. Yes, he was librarian for the county library service in his village, and wished he had more time to study. The books he had read included a lot of good solid stuff, the taste for which, he told me, grew on him. We reached his destination all too soon, and he left the carriage with the book in his bag, undertaking to return it before long, against my promise to exchange it for the other volumes.

I was left alone with an older man, who had listened to our talk. 'He's a chip of the old block,' he observed, 'with a bit of modern polish, but a good worker, mind you. I'd like to have him in my lot. I'm a foreman carpenter on the St. Pancras Town-hall job—oak panelling and wood-block flooring and carved marble: a real beautiful place it's going to be—no shoddy and nothing scamped. It's not so easy to get men who can do the best work; they lost the habit after the war, for nobody wanted good work then.' But, he continued, business

was better, and public bodies were putting up good buildings and putting in good material that it was a pleasure to work with. It was not right that money should be lavished on hotels and cinemas and big offices while public buildings were allowed to remain dingy, ill-lit and ill-ventilated. Government ought to set an example like the Post Office was now doing. Some county courts, for example, were a disgrace: he had been on a job or two in them. Most employment exchanges were nothing to be proud of—enough to keep employers away, let alone decent men; they looked more like railway-stations—they were so neglected. He was firmly seated on his hobby-horse and rode it, as I walked alongside him out of the station and for half a mile or more down the road, where our ways parted. ‘You don’t live here,’ he concluded; ‘who may you be?’ I explained that he had sent me to Westminster ten months ago. ‘I ought to have known you,’ he said; ‘I’ve seen your likeness often enough: but there, I’ve never troubled with politics myself, but my wife and girls, they enjoy meetings and go regular’—whether to one or both party meetings he did not indicate.

These conversations are but tiny flashes of light from the innumerable facets of the mirror of life and are, taken separately, of no importance. They are typical of the daily talk of millions, and are as much a part of real history as the volumes of *Hansard*. The speakers, one and all, implicitly trust their leaders and elected representatives but have, and can have, no real voice in deciding the direction in which the country’s policy is moving at home or abroad. This trust is a heavy responsibility. Is the machinery of government at our disposal adequate for the discharge of this trust? If not, who and what stand in the way of those who would devise better machinery? It is a question for which we will eventually have to find an answer.

It fell to me this month, as Principal of the Working Men's College, a honourable office, the mantle of which has since fallen upon the broader and more competent shoulders of Lord Justice Greene, to address the newly enrolled students—about one hundred, of whom not more than half, as a rule, survive the first year's discipline. A man needs more than average determination to persevere at evening classes, three or four days a week after a full day's work, devoted to difficult subjects, not directly vocational. That so many young men complete their fourth and fifth years of such studies is proof of the demand as well as the need for a liberal education at the hands of men qualified to give it not only as teachers, but as friends. The fact that all teachers at the College are unpaid volunteers, drawn from many walks of life, but largely from the Civil Service, creates a unique relationship between teacher and pupil.

I took as the subject of my homily the nature of the loyalties which men owe not only to the State but to many formal or informal human groupings within it or even independent of it.

'The test of a good State is whether it is a good member of the comity of Nations. The test may be applied to associative loyalties within a State—do they contribute to the welfare of the State as a whole?

'That community has the best chance of being proof against totalitarian perversions which can develop the most free and full and harmonious associative life. In this country the State is only one of several institutions to which men owe loyalty.

'The French Revolution prepared the way for Napoleon by declaring war on particular associations within the State. Affirming one over-riding loyalty, it opened the way to the men who learned best how to exploit that loyalty.

'Lenin did the same: he claimed, like his successors, absolute obedience from and subordination of the per-

sonal will of the individual to "the State." Mussolini did likewise. I quote his own words:

The Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State. Fascism is totalitarian; the Fascist State is a unit and a synthesis inclusive of all values, and interprets, develops and gives power and shape to the whole life. No individuals, groups, political parties or cultural associations, economic unions or social classes, can exist outside the State. Whatever they be, religious bodies or trade unions or federations of employers, they must form part of a harmonious whole—or cease to exist.

'Hitler did much the same thing. The National Socialist doctrine of Germany differs from that of Italy primarily in its emphasis on race—a problem which does not exist in Italy.

' "The State," in Mussolini's words, "creates the nation and therefore real life among a people made aware of their moral unity."

'In Poland and in the Balkans and further east the same principle is accepted.

'Let us be under no illusions. It is a popular creed: it arouses and sustains loyalty to the State as nothing else can—but *to the State only*.

'The loyalty of Communist Russians to Soviet Russia, or Fascists to the Fascist State, of Germans to the Nazi Government is tremendous—as great a power as there is in human affairs.

'But it is of necessity destructive of other loyalties—to the Churches—to the family—to innumerable associative loyalties which engender conflict because they compel comparison, choice, judgment. These must be unified, or disappear, and that is precisely what has happened in Russia and in Germany, in Italy and in many other countries.

'The instinct for unity is deep in nature—it is the main-spring of religious and scientific and political thought.



But human beings have never for long found spiritual satisfaction and peace in organised unity. The outstanding example in history is perhaps the Inca system in Peru : there was something of the sort among Zulus only fifty years ago, and I have witnessed a not dissimilar unity in Saudi Arabia.

‘ Such unity is in fact not rational, because it expressly denies the individual’s right to judge and to choose for himself and to exercise his reason, and that community is likely to have the most rational citizens which has the fullest associative life.

‘ For this reason—I speak as a politician—but not on party lines—I believe that we should encourage and develop the associative life : provided that it be informed by mutual acceptance of the many-sidedness of truth, which is better than “ tolerance ” and the attitude of mind which it connotes.

‘ But it has its own dangers against which we must guard. The free growth of associative life is essential to good health, but it is not the only essential. There must be a certain harmony among the many societies which make up society. What is this harmony ? It depends first of all on a basis of common ideas and assumptions broad enough to sustain us in our common life, embodied in a set of social institutions which most people regard as not perfect or even good, but capable of improvement at will and in essence not unjust in action.’

## CHAPTER XIX

NOVEMBER 1936

Whatever I be, I wish to be that thing elsewhere than on paper. I have used my art and my industry that I might learn to do, not to write.

MONTAIGNE. *Essays*, ii. 37.

*'Soleo enim in aliena castra transire, non tanquam transfuga, sed tanquam explorator.'* With these words of Seneca in my mind I gladly accepted an invitation to Dublin to attend the first meeting of the 126th session of the Trinity College Historical Society, of which Edmund Burke was a founder. The night boat from Liverpool carried fewer passengers in the third class than in the saloons, and there was no lack of comfortable beds (2s. each) for those who could afford to pay this sum, in addition to the modest fare (10s.). The company below was, as always, interesting and varied. Half a dozen men, who sat together, were returning from contract work for the fifth year in succession on Lincolnshire farms. They had been making good money since June—a minimum of £2 and often £3 a week after paying all expenses—and were on their way home to Galway and Connemara to look after their bits of land. They were loud in their praise of the English, who were 'as good to Irishmen as Irishmen to each other.'

The compliment evoked from the only Englishman present, as intended, a Guinness all round, but also a protest from one young Irishman from co. Clare. He was set on joining the Navy: he was passed fit, but, since 'some dirty swine' had murdered Admiral Somerville, no one

without relatives who had served in the Fighting Forces was admitted unless he could bring a reference from a retired officer. He had papers which bore out what he said. He had tried in many quarters. They all said 'We want to live a bit longer,' and would sign nothing, nor even answer letters by post. He longed to serve: he was born to the sea. It was unjust and inhuman that the fears of others should decide his fate. He had no use for politicians: he wanted to be free to serve what he called the 'old' country.

Encouraged by his frankness, another took up the tale. The English had done the dirty on Irish war pensioners. There was in his village a war widow with an epileptic son. When he was twenty-one his allowance was stopped, but she kept him at home. She died when he was twenty-three and he was sent to the union: had he been given a pension, he could have stayed with his uncle. He was a decent chap: the union was just a prison. Had his mother died before he was twenty-one, he would have got a pension. The English Treasury pared and scraped every pensioner, interpreting every regulation against them; it was worse for the Irish than for the English, for there were fewer charities to fall back on in Ireland.

I could not deny the charge: I knew of similar cases in England. Much of the unpopularity of the Army is due to the grievances of ex-soldiers and their dependants, who are not receiving, in border-line cases, the treatment Parliament and the taxpayers intended. Our war charities, numbering many hundreds, overlapping, often expensively administered, need unifying by Act of Parliament, and centralising as a preliminary to some intelligent delegation of functions. I should like to see the British Legion given over-riding statutory powers in such matters.

Two days in Dublin passed quickly: it is a city with great architectural and scholastic traditions. The Marsh Library, with its fine series of old Prayer-books, delighted me. The University Library was a glorious blend of

ancient and modern. The Herald's College, *auspicium melioris aevi*, housed in a Danish tower, with tabards and seals, old and new, suggested many thoughts, not all of them depressing. In the two Protestant cathedrals were memorials to many a man whom Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's would have been delighted to honour, but who, as Milton said of Shakespeare, lies here

and, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie  
that kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

I spent some time in the Dail. The procedure is suspiciously like our own: the long array of questions to, and often evasive replies of, Ministers, the complaints that private members' time is being filched by the Government, all seemed very familiar.

I had the honour of an interview with Mr. de Valera in his room adjoining the Chamber. He looked well; his sight appeared good: he was as affable as other dictators I have met, and as certain of himself and of popular support. The only reply he could make to an unreasonable Cabinet in Westminster was patiently to pursue the course he had set for himself, in the hope that we should some day see the light. Time was on his side: even in Northern Ireland opinion in favour of Union was growing; if England were to cease to subsidise Northern Ireland, it would grow faster. Irish industry was growing slowly, but he readily agreed that the migration of Irishmen, mostly to England (14,000 in 1935 and 24,000 in 1936 and 300,000 since 1920), whilst less than the former migration to all countries, is a loss which is not counter-balanced by their remittances. But free movement, if only to Britain, is a great safety-valve.

He spoke of many things which I will not attempt to record here: they are to be found in his recent speeches. I left with the impression that Mr. de Valera himself is three-quarters of the Irish problem: the rest is represented in equal moieties by the British and Irish peoples.

The debate in the Great Hall at Trinity College was attended by men only: the Auditor of the Historical Society opened the discussion with dignity. The most notable contributions in the subsequent discussion were by Peadar O'Donnell, well known abroad as author of *The Islanders*, and Sean O'Phaolain, another Irish writer of eminence, but with a very different political outlook.

I was not less fortunate in my company on the return journey to Liverpool. A Cockney Jewish tailor on his way to Whitechapel, a Scottish commercial traveller from Newcastle, and a spruce young English accountant, left our ranks early, for the sea was choppy. The survivors, to whom sandwiches and bread and butter were the best aid to gaiety, included three young men on their way to earn a living—on the land, if possible. They had almost no money, and no idea where to go or what to do, but were self-reliant and proud of their ability to work hard at any task. 'Keep out of Liverpool, and the big cities,' said an old hand; 'that's where the bad Irish get to, and they'll bleed you or drag you down. Go to the small country towns; that's where men who can work are welcome. Take a job, however bad, for six months, to get your card stamped and a character for steadiness, and start looking round for something better before next harvest.'

Another passenger, the oldest, was a man of the Royal Munsters, with stories of India and France and Silesia. He was a navy by trade, and had just buried his sister. The telegram had reached him near London a few days ago. He threw up his job and went home to give her a worthy funeral. It had cost him £30, with two motor cars and a hearse and seven miles to go to the cemetery. She was his only surviving relative. All that was on his mind now was whether he had paid for enough masses for the repose of her soul. He was hoping to get back on his old job in Acton.

The youngest was a Dublin boy, cheerful and penniless. His father had paid 10s. for his ticket. He would join the 'English' Army, as his cousin had done: he heard that they needed recruits. Was he big enough for the Irish Guards? They had a fine uniform. Why did not other regiments dress better? There was a Kerry man, too, son of a petty officer, from the wildest part of the west coast, more at home in a canoe than a ship, who hoped to join the Navy. He wanted to be a stoker, but was not sure that he had had enough schooling. He had been lobster fishing all the summer: the season had been bad. French poachers had cleared the best grounds and there was none to stop them.

Another was a youth from Connemara—the younger son of a very small holder. He had been on the land all his life and wanted to get a job on a farm. He could plough and reap and sow, lift beet and handle pigs. We discussed his prospects at length, and I gave him a letter to a farmer.

The old soldier encouraged them all in turn. The Navy was good: so was the Army; and he should know. They should not lose heart if they did not get a job at once. They should not whine and say they were down and out, but stand up to life and keep their eye on the foremen and gangers, who had more power than any clerks in the office.

I visited the recruiting offices in Liverpool of the three services, in three different streets. The general appearance of the Army Recruiting Office, without and within, would not have done credit to a dispensary for sick animals, with its blowsy posters, its mean approach up a dark stairway, and the poverty-stricken appearance of the furnishings. An Army blanket covered a W.D. trestle-table; more old blankets covered the truckle-beds on which recruits must lie for medical examination. The walls were black with the grime of decades. The other two offices were a little but not much better. Separatism

is the strongest instinct of the services, but I cannot doubt that if Sir Thomas Inskip could arrange for joint recruiting offices, and for a single medical examination for all three services, in premises which would themselves reflect the *joie de vivre* and self-respect of the services themselves, he would get more recruits and save money. They do these things differently in America.

I had business in Liverpool, and I stayed to hear what happened to my four young friends. Two were accepted for the Army; one, who proved to be colour-blind, failed for the Navy. He wanted to be a stoker: he could tell colours in the ordinary way, as I proved, but the test was too much for him. I suppose it is essential for every stoker to be able to distinguish all colours perfectly, but it seems hard that no place can be found for born sailors who only become aware of this defect when tested. Might they not sometimes learn if trained for a time?

The other failed for the Navy because of bad teeth—the main ground of rejection for all services. How far is this a necessary condition? Is it irremediable by dental care after enlistment? Food in the Army and Navy is not as tough as it was forty years ago, and the average man's teeth are worse. A heavy responsibility rests on those who have steadily obstructed the inclusion of full dental treatment as a statutory benefit under the National Health Insurance scheme. We spend more on drugs under the Acts than on dentists; and far more on doctors than on dentists. Yet every middle-class householder reckons to spend more on dentists than on drugs and doctors combined, unless it is a question of an operation, and holds it to be money well spent.

One of the rejected pleaded with me to find him a job. He had never gone farther afield than the nearest market town. Liverpool frightened him: it was all so big and unfriendly. 'I always hope that one day I shall own a bit of land in my village, and it all belongs to somebody, but

no one could or would want to own this ' ; and he pointed to the black, forbidding masses of office buildings.

I took him with me. At Crewe I offered him Peadar O'Donnell's *The Islanders* <sup>1</sup> ; he turned a page or two idly and then began to read steadily, not raising his eyes from the book. As we neared Euston I asked him how he liked it. ' That man knows,' he said solemnly ; ' father should be reading it.' It was an eloquent review. He is now—a year later—happily at work in a Hertfordshire village.

' Back to the land ' is an old cry : the need for small-holdings is another. The deciding, though not the only, factor is wages.

The following are extracts from a letter which reached me last month from an under-stockman, aged twenty-four, with a wife and three fine children, whose passion for the land induced him to leave house-painting for farming five years ago. He is employed by one of the richest men in England on a model farm.

I don't ask for anything for myself, but for my wife and kids. I would do anything, no matter what it was. They deserve something better than this existence. If I could set up with an acre of ground and start pig and poultry breeding, I could make a living, pay back what I was lent to start it with, and show a good profit at the end of a year or two. But miracles like that don't happen these days, and I shall have to carry on in the same old rut. This ' back to the land ' talk is all very well, but farmers expect labourers to work for 33s. to 35s. a week when they can get 1s. 3d. an hour building, and earn anything from £3 to £4 a week and also get from Saturday dinner-time till Monday morning free.

' I am better off than some,' the letter continued.

I get 35s. 8d. for a sixty-eight hour week ; I get three pints of milk for the children, and pay no rent. But I live three miles from

<sup>1</sup> Traveller's Library.



the shops, and they charge extra for delivery. My wife has a bicycle, but can't leave the children. I am up at 5 and back at 5 with two hours for meals, but there is no overtime pay when the cows calve or the pigs are farrowing, nor anything for harvesting. It's an all-in wage and I shall never get any more as long as I live. Yet I see men on £6 a week striking for more, and others saying milk's too dear. I'm a stone lighter now than I was when I went on to this farm: as I milk the cows I say to myself, 'How much of this milk is going to make 25 per cent. profit for the big dairies or going to be drunk by the children of men with three times my pay?'

I offer no comment: the solution is being sought, and has perhaps been found, in some parts of Europe. When shall we have the courage to insist on a decent wage for the decent men without whom the countryside, on which we so easily wax sentimental, would soon be a waste of weeds, as, in some places, it has already become? The fertility of the counties of South Wales and of the north-east and north-west coasts is less than it was a hundred years ago; bracken is gaining everywhere on the grass land and on fields once under the plough.

In Chapter XI I summarised a discussion with Professor Pastor on current developments in Europe. The course of events has closely followed his anticipations. He returned recently from Spain, and we again met to discuss the tragic sequence of events in the Iberian peninsula. His first question was—'How would you like a Bolshevik Spain, and how would it affect England and France? How would you like a Largo Caballero in Downing Street?' He rightly judged from my silence that I preferred not to discuss such an eventuality, and he allowed me to turn the tables by asking him questions. I recalled his broadcast in October 1934, when the situation in Asturias, a prelude to the horrors of to-day, rehearsed by Anarchists, Communists and Socialists, but never performed, was at its worst. He summed it up over the wireless in these words:

All men of good will in Spain, with the exception of the Socialists, have rallied to the Presidential policy. The tragedy of the whole situation . . . is due to a large extent to the folly and political incompetence of that party—the Socialists—to which high-minded and intellectually honest men belong, some of them my good friends.

They refuse to see reason and, faced with a situation in which they could have played an invaluable part of a critical, even destructive but always parliamentary opposition, chose the way where 'fair is foul and foul is fair,' and have made themselves responsible for disorder and bloodshed, which could easily have been avoided if the parties of the Left had added to their enthusiasm some political common sense and moral maturity.

'What is Franco's policy?' I asked. He handed me documents, some of which I reproduce below, observing that Franco was no Fascist, but a leader; no Socialist, but a soldier to whom social justice came first.

The first ran as follows:

DECLARATION TO THE GENERALS AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS BY  
GENERAL FRANCO AT BURGOS ON ASSUMING SUPREME POWER  
ON OCTOBER 1, 1936.

You may be proud of your work. You have in these moments handed over to me a united Spain, when you found it in pieces. You arose with different garrisons, displaying the fine flag of Spanish tradition, rooted in the spirit of the people; which stands for a race which does not wish to die and for a civilisation on the verge of destruction by the Red hordes of Moscow.

In rising against them you are not only defending the nation but civilisation itself, fighting with the spirit of soldiers, of Castille, a spirit which was beginning to wilt. Now after two months of struggle with victory, honour and organisation on our side you hand over Spain to me.

I can, at this solemn moment, say but this, with the certainty of a soldier and the loyalty of a man. You have put Spain in my hands. They will be firm, and my pulse will be steady. I shall

seek to raise Spain to a position worthy of her history which she occupied in past times.

You have handed over to me all executive power. I will do my duty or die as did those brave men, Phalangists and Carlists, soldiers and the heroic cadets of Toledo, who proclaimed the glory of Spain to the world. Thus, and to this end, you are all with me. This Junta will continue to work with me for the greatness of Spain ; it will remain at my side in order to make a great Spain united by high ideals—a Spain for true Spaniards. Long live Spain !

A few minutes later he made the following declaration to the assembled crowd :

Just as, from a distance of 400 kilometres, we said to the defenders of the Alcazar ' We will reach and rescue you,' and did so, so we now say to you ' No Spaniard shall lack fuel, no workman bread: those who have more shall give to those who have less.' This social justice, which can be brought about only in a spirit of love, we shall seek to ensure by persuasion, but we have a hand sufficiently hard to impose it.

We demand of you, in return, the sacrifices you are already making for Spain, for not everything can be done by *arrivistes*; the workman, the soldier, the employer and employee also have their duties to perform, so that Spain may again illuminate the world which was lit up by the heroic defenders of Toledo.

None of these documents was printed in full in any newspaper so far as I know.

' Whatever mistake,' concluded Professor Pastor, ' the National Party, guided by Franco, will make, let us remember that it is at present a most heterogeneous conglomeration, ranging from the ultra-Catholic Carlists to Liberal sympathisers, and including many who perhaps have joined it originally for unworthy motives. All these variegated groups are to-day united by a genuine love of their country. Perhaps their sins will be forgiven for this excess of love which my eyes have seen, for I believe it to be a manifestation of that spirit that Europe so sorely

needs, of which the unconquerable spirit of the cadets of Toledo will remain as a symbol. There is a kind of spiritual radiance about these heroic gestures which is like sunlight between the leaden clouds. A new Europe can be born from faith and love only ; never from legislation sponsored by spectacled experts from afar. These have their uses, and, indeed, their place in Spain is empty at the moment ; but they must be tools, and not the guiding hand. Four times already the fate of Europe has been fought in Spain or by Spaniards : the Peninsula was the battlefield between Rome and Carthage, between Cross and Crescent, and of the victory of West over East. Spain was the spearhead of the counter-Reformation, and Spain broke, with Napoleon, the spirit of the French Revolution.

‘ This present struggle may prove in retrospect to be one more battle of the West against the East—one more crusade of the individual against the Moloch of regimented hordes. But one must not talk about Russia ; so much nonsense on both sides has been poured forth, and the attempt to examine this question with precision has already defeated one International Committee.’

At my side, as we spoke, lay the daily papers, reporting the agony which has gripped Spain and which has horrified the world. It is not desirable for us as a nation to take sides : it is very necessary to remind ourselves that because General Franco’s foes are supported by Russia, and by sympathisers with Russia, it does not follow that he is or will be an ally of Italy or Germany. We can, if we have the courage to do so, ensure that Spain is as independent in future as she was in the Great War. We, and France, should make this the primary object of our joint endeavours. It is the belief of those who know General Franco best that he would readily lend himself to such a policy and that, with our aid, he might succeed.

Mrs. Briggens came to see me at the House of Commons by appointment. Her boy had been ‘ sent to one

of them Reformatories,' and she wanted him back. He was high-spirited and had got into bad ways; he had been misled by bigger boys. Now he was at school 'with a lot of young thieves' and it broke her heart. After half an hour's talk with her I felt sorry for the boy. She had tried my patience sorely and must have maddened him. I promised to see him at the school, talk to the Headmaster and let her know by letter what I thought.

On the following Saturday I visited the training school, standing in open fields, four miles from the nearest town and looking at a distance more like a big farm-house with large out-buildings. There were one hundred and fifty boys in the school, from fifteen to nineteen. The dormitories and dining-rooms were as good as those of any public school. The bread was baked and the cows milked by the boys themselves. They grew their own vegetables on land belonging to the school; the piggery, on model Danish lines, was as clean as the school and the pigs as happy as the boys. The pigs, weighed weekly by the boys in charge, were unconsciously competing with each other for the honour of an early death at the nearest bacon factory.

The Headmaster, whose father had followed the same profession, showed me the carpenter's shed, where very good work was being turned out, the tailor's shop and various class-rooms, all freshly painted or distempered by the boys themselves. Light without luxury best describes the impression left on my mind.

But what chiefly interested me were the boys themselves. I scanned their faces carefully as they ate their dinner in Hall, and later in the playing field, which they themselves had levelled and sown. Three out of four had been convicted of larceny, yet nine out of ten looked well-bred. I could have picked from the two elevens in the upper ground a team which, photographed in football kit, could not be distinguished from that of any public school. They played a good game; they were keen

and clearly in good condition. At half-time I passed the time of day with a number of them, including, by arrangement, Cyril Briggens, but was careful not to let him know that he was the cause of my visit. We only exchanged a few casual words, but, after watching him in Hall and on the field, it was clear that his salvation was here and not at home.

I walked back with the Headmaster, as wise and generous-hearted a man as any who ended his days as a Bishop or a Canon. He took me over the glass-houses and gardens where boys are trained as nurserymen, the lime and gravel pit, where school needs are met. What a wealth of goodwill and wisdom, I reflected, goes to make the world as it is. I would trust my boys to him as readily as to any man I have met.

He showed me his Annual Report; the cost of the school, including all overheads, is about 28s. per head per week, exactly that of a Training Centre under the Ministry of Labour or an Institution for Mental Deficients. One out of every five boys in his charge, he said, would never be fit for more than unskilled work: of the remainder, all might do well in the right environment. Well might they pray, when they left, to be saved from their friends—elderly corner boys, whose joy it was to cause little ones to stumble and to mislead weaker minds. He spoke of his Sunday evening talks, of the occasional prudent interventions of his wife, to whose genius the school owed the bright colour schemes in the rooms and much else. He praised his staff, and his Advisory Committee, local men of position who helped him at every turn and supported him whenever necessary. The Home Office officials were very good, the Ministry of Labour helped when the time came for boys to leave school. He wished more would join the Army, which was not so closely linked with social services as it should be.

Of Cyril Briggens he gave an encouraging report: he had not been at the school long enough to find his feet,

but he was shaping well. He realised now that he had been sent here not as a punishment, but in order that he might be made a man ; ' it is a pity the magistrates don't make that clearer to start with.' A fine-looking youth of eighteen, whom I had seen reading in the prefects' room, was in charge of Cyril's dormitory : the Headmaster sent for him and asked him a few questions ; his answers confirmed what the Headmaster had told me.

If we can do such things for delinquents, what may we not do for the more fortunate. What matter if some of us grow up on a lower level of comfort, if we can secure a higher level for the whole. The Headmaster was a religious man : he did not preach, though he knew the Prayer Book and his Bible right well : but I was conscious that the motive power behind his daily life was the first, as well as the second of the two Great Commandments.

I saw Mrs. Briggens again a week later and left her, I hope, happier and less resentful. ' We must guard against our besetting sins,' said Theodore Roosevelt, ' hardness of heart and softness of head.' Her husband seems to have suffered from the former and she from the latter. But Cyril will be better than either of them.

## CHAPTER XX

DECEMBER 1936

Ilion, Ilion  
fatalis incestusque iudex  
et mulier peregrina vertit  
in pulverem.

HORACE. *Odes*, III, iii.

' O Ilium, Ilium, wretched town,  
A judge accurst, incontinent  
And stranger dame have cast thee down.'

I HAVE omitted from earlier chapters any reference to the events preceding the abdication of King Edward VIII, not because they were not uppermost in my own mind from the moment of my return from Germany onwards, but because there was nothing tangible which anyone outside a small circle could regard as more than straws in the wind. For months past the American Press had devoted much attention to the marital intentions of the King; truth and rumour, speculative comment and historical events were intermingled with salacious gossip and the foulest innuendo. Many such papers found their way to this country and, in the words of Ovid (*Tristia*, ii. 536):

*Nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto,  
Quam non legitimo foedere junctus amor.*

No part was read with more attention  
Than that which of illicit love made mention.



The daily Press maintained without exception an exemplary silence, unbroken even by the *Daily Worker*, which has scant respect for the conventions of journalism or of the Law Courts. The *Court Circular* was read with curiosity by some, with anxiety by many. The King's visits to South Wales, and to the Fleet, were chronicled with customary detail in the columns of every newspaper and were commented upon by leader-writers who longed to say to His Majesty:

*Tractas et incedis per ignes*

*Suppositos cineri doloso.*

You treat, as one on fire should tread

Scarce hid by treacherous ashen crust.

A sense of impending catastrophe pervaded the comparatively small circle which understood the cumulative significance of what was going on, but it was combined with a sense of unreality, of incredibility, such as I have experienced in war in the hour before an attack is launched. And there were many who would have preferred the imminent risk of death in battle to the contemplation of a constitutional crisis in such conditions as were gradually being unfolded. What we all wanted to know, and could only guess at, was the probable reaction of the public at large.

The views of the upper and middle classes caused no concern: they would take their cue from the newspapers they were accustomed to read, which, in turn, could at such a juncture be relied upon to give sound, cautious advice which would, incidentally, accord closely with the ultimate decision of the Cabinet, if ever it were called upon to make one.

But what of the simpler minded, ingenuous men in the office, the mine, the factory, the shop, the barrack square, the ship and the bus? What line would they take? Such men are less moved by the daily Press than is popularly supposed, and some newspapers might decide to follow

or reflect rather than to guide and lead public opinion. Not one man in a hundred, not one woman in twenty or thirty goes to church more than once a year, if that. Would they be moved by anything that Bishops might say? Popular views on divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons are latitudinarian, inspired by a tolerant outlook on human frailty which is sometimes mistaken for indifference. Some held that the principle *noblesse oblige* was regarded by the public to-day as mandatory upon those of royal blood; others thought that the average man, and most women even, would wish the King to enjoy complete liberty in a matter which they would regard as his personal affair. No one felt certain as to the probable trend of mass feeling.

At 4 P.M. on December 1 a cloud, 'like a man's hand,' gathered over the room in the city of Bradford in which the Right Reverend A. W. F. Blunt was addressing his Diocesan Conference. He was known as a man of learning and of letters, Anglo-Catholic in outlook, outspoken, but less given to intervention in secular affairs than many of his colleagues. Like the Archbishop of York he had never spoken in the House of Lords, where he might have been answered or corrected; he had no first-hand acquaintance with the King, and no ecclesiastical responsibility at the Court or in connexion with any royal residence. Whatever he said was, therefore, of necessity at second-hand; in other words he was, as indeed he proclaimed, the mouthpiece of others. A single sentence in his address, prepared, the public were given to understand, six weeks earlier, was endowed, in the light of circumstances of which, as he protested a few days later, he was wholly unaware, with high political significance. It ran as follows:

The benefit of the King's Coronation depends, under God, upon two elements; first, on the faith, prayer and self-dedication of the King himself. . . . We hope that he is aware of his need. Some of us wish he gave more positive signs of his awareness.

The text of his sober address had been handed to the Press in advance: it was given to a small audience, very few of whom, any more than the Bishop, can have ascribed to it the significance with which it was invested, on the following day, by the *Yorkshire Post* and other provincial journals, and by the *Manchester Guardian*, whose editors simultaneously decided that the time had come when the self-imposed vow of silence, so long and so honourably observed, should be broken. The Bishop's words were interpreted as a reference to matters of which, he at once explained, he had no direct personal knowledge. It is thus clear that he was, in a sense, the mouthpiece of others.

On December 3 and for the rest of the week every daily and weekly paper devoted its leading articles and much of its space to the subject of the King's marital intentions. The Prime Minister said to a crowded and anxious House of Commons: 'I have no statement to make to-day. While there does not at present exist any constitutional difficulty, the situation is of such a nature as to make it inexpedient that I should be questioned about it at this stage.' Asked by Mr. Winston Churchill on Thursday, December 3, and again on Friday, December 4, to assure the House that no irrevocable step would be taken before a formal statement had been made to Parliament, the Prime Minister declined to promise anything but, before the House adjourned on Friday afternoon, he made a short statement, so timed as to render, under the rules of the House, any discussion, even if desired, impossible.

A few Members of Parliament, of whom I was one, met as soon as the House rose in order to consider what if anything could be done to dispel the impression, which this speech did nothing to remove, that the King was being pressed to make a hasty decision. Mr. Churchill issued that night a statement, printed in the Press next morning,

which seemed to me and to other Members to be timely.

I plead for time and patience [it ran]. The nation must realise the character of the constitutional issue. There is no question of any conflict between the King and Parliament. Parliament has not been consulted in any way, nor allowed to express any opinion.

The question is whether the King is to abdicate upon the advice of the Ministry of the day. No such advice has ever before been tendered to a Sovereign in parliamentary times. . . .

The King has no means of personal access to his Parliament or his people. Between him and them stand in their office the Ministers of the Crown. If they thought it their duty to engage all their power and influence against him, still he must remain silent. All the more must they be careful not to be the judge in their own case, and to show a loyal and Christian patience even at some political embarrassment to themselves. If an abdication were to be hastily extorted, the outrage so committed would cast its shadow forward across many chapters of the history of the British Empire.

Mr. Churchill was hotly criticised by his own Party and in some other quarters for having spoken thus. Personal and political motives were suggested. I believe such imputations to have been utterly baseless. It was the courageous utterance of a sincere spirit deeply moved. Soon after making it Mr. Churchill sought and obtained audience of His Majesty.

Sir Stafford Cripps, on the same day, said :

It is suggested that the Cabinet are insisting upon the King either giving up his proposed marriage or abdicating. Granted that we are to continue with a constitutional monarchy in this country, I personally cannot see any sufficient reason for forcing the abdication of the King because of the choice which he has made.

We must remember that the King is old enough to know his own mind, and that it is his marriage, and not that of a robot, that we are discussing.

Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, M.P., a Privy Councillor and an Independent Member of the Opposition, placed the following motion upon the Order Book of the House of Commons :

That, in the opinion of this House, the Oath of Allegiance <sup>1</sup> which they have already taken to King Edward VIII. is unaffected by any form of Coronation ceremony or by the presence thereat or absence therefrom of any dignitary or personage whatsoever ; nor will they substitute any other for the King of England. [*An early day.*]

Events in Spain were moving fast : they disappeared from the front pages and, for a time, from men's minds : the general public, in any case, had already determined that in all circumstances Great Britain should remain aloof. Parliament, in Standing Committee, continued to examine clause by clause a Bill designed to strengthen as well as to amend our Marriage Law, and in Select Committee, to consider what amendments were desirable in the taxation of ' patent ' medicines. At any other time these, and like subjects, would have aroused much public interest : they were overshadowed by the constitutional crisis.

Rumours spread fast, and were not allayed by Mr. Baldwin's statement that ' no constitutional difficulty yet existed.'

I was, by an unhappy chance, engaged to attend and speak at a village dinner in my constituency that Friday evening. The squire, neighbouring landowners, the parson, and a few others were at the cross-table at the end of the hall. It was one of those occasions which enable a Member of Parliament, in an emergency, to gauge the temper of the great mass of his constituents and, like

<sup>1</sup> The Oath of Allegiance, prescribed by cap. 72, 31 & 32 Vict., 1868, runs as follows : I ——— do <sup>swear</sup>/<sub>affirm</sub> that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Edward, His Heirs and Successors, according to Law (*viz.*, the *Act of Succession*, 1707).

Antaeus in his contest with Heracles, to derive strength from contact with the soil. The fare was simple, cold meat and pickles, fresh vegetables and beer. The squire, who presided, knew and was known by every one of the hundred men and boys in the room. His own butler, grooms and gamekeepers waited on the tables; cheerful healthy-looking women beamed upon us as we entered by way of the kitchen. The vicar said grace. The dinner was good, but better still the sight of those sturdy men, seldom a prey to doubt. Many had served in the war; those who had not were either too young or too old to have done so. They were bewildered to-night, and said so. Their sympathies were as yet with the King; their loyalty and their faith were personal, not institutional. It was very clear that they needed time to assimilate the news; a rapid decision reached in the next forty-eight hours might bring about a reaction of blind anger. I realised that it was not an occasion for references to employment figures, national recovery, agricultural depression and the Factory Bill. I half wished I had found some reason for absenting myself. The men at the three long trestle-tables clearly had something on their minds in common; at least half had served in the war: the talk was subdued, the impression was one of anxiety and expectancy. Should we propose the health of His Majesty and sing a verse of the National Anthem? It would savour of insincerity, almost of blasphemy. The squire consulted me. 'Propose it yourself,' he concluded, 'and say what you want to say: it's no good talking politics or any cheerio-stuff this evening.' 'Were the Press present?' I asked. Yes, a reporter of the local Press was there, notebook in hand.

I rose nervously amid complete silence. It was not possible, I said, to speak at such a moment except of the King, to whom I was about to ask them to raise their glasses. They knew, at last, of the anxieties that had long occupied his mind and that of the Prime Minister,

the mention of whose name raised a cheer. It was not, in my submission, right or necessary that the King should be forced, under the ruthless glare of publicity, to take a hasty decision. The public had yet to learn the facts, and the public in the Dominions and India had not yet had time to consider the circumstances in all their bearings.

The Prime Minister deserved and enjoyed the sympathy and respect of all men at this moment, yet our allegiance was to his present Majesty, and to none other. No party loyalty could be allowed to have precedence over this duty, and we should not speak of abdication as a possibility. 'Let us drink to his health,' I concluded, 'as a man as well as a monarch, in silence and with a prayer on our lips that he might act with the courage and wisdom that we had learned to expect from our rulers.' I saw tears in the eyes of some men: the emotions aroused were deep. I left the hall at once: a few men spoke to me outside, saying I was right in my plea for time: neither the King, nor the nation, should be rushed into hasty courses.

The Archbishop of Canterbury next morning (December 5) proclaimed to the clergy that silence was fitting. He would perhaps have done better to have said it when the Bishop of Bradford's speech had clearly invited controversy. His advice was accepted. But public opinion was in need of no such guidance as the pulpit might afford. The decision was recognised to be one for the King alone: the verdict against a morganatic marriage was, in the circumstances, recognised to be just.

Article XXV. of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion lays down that

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say . . . Matrimony . . . are not to be counted Sacraments of the Gospel,

being . . . states of life allowed in the Scriptures ; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

That is, broadly speaking, to-day, as then, the English view, which is tolerant, unwilling to cast a stone, or to judge others by a rigid canon. But the feeling grew, and in growing gathered strength, that such a marriage as the King was understood to contemplate was inconsistent with kingship, whatever form it might take.

That same evening, by another unhappy chance, I had to dine with a Cyclists' Club, drawn from a somewhat more sophisticated stratum of society than my audience of the previous evening. The talk before and during dinner gave me quite a different impression. Some of the men wore evening dress. It was an 'open evening' and many ladies were present. They seemed either to misunderstand or to be indifferent to the course of events—now fast moving to a crisis. The Chairman rapped on the table and proposed the toast of 'The King,' without any introductory words; a young woman struck the proper chords on the hotel piano, the company feebly piped the words, apparently unaware that they carried, at the moment, any significance. I have always felt our National Anthem, alike in tune, in form, and in content, to be wholly unworthy of us, casting as it does upon the Deity the sole responsibility for the maintenance of the monarchy. I never liked it less than on that occasion. Of the fifty young men present I ascertained that not one was a Territorial.

The political sky was still heavily overcast on Monday, December 7; the belief that abdication was inevitable had hardened during the week-end, but of the scores of letters from constituents nine-tenths begged me to stand out against such a possibility. The British Legion Clubs, I was told, felt deeply on the subject; a doctor, who had



canvassed men working in several factories, said that he met few men who were not against an abdication. An unsigned communication, in the form of a voting card, put the outlook of the writer concisely :

Edward Wins'er	X
Stanley Baldwin	

Another ran :

‘ We put no soiled goods in *our* shop window .

Further questioned in Parliament on Monday, December 7, Mr. Baldwin said :

I am glad to have the occasion of making a further statement on the position. In considering this whole matter it has always been, and remains, the earnest desire of the Government to afford to His Majesty the fullest opportunity of weighing a decision which involves so directly his own future happiness and the interests of all his subjects. At the same time they cannot but be aware that any considerable prolongation of the present state of suspense and uncertainty would involve risk of the gravest injury to national and Imperial interests ; and, indeed, no one is more insistent upon this aspect of the situation than His Majesty. . . .

I cannot conclude this statement without expressing—what the whole House feels—our deep and respectful sympathy with His Majesty at this time. . . . I think that the whole House will agree with me that at this moment when the situation is so grave and anxious, and while the King is considering these matters and has not yet made up his mind, I should feel great difficulty in offering information in answering supplementary questions, especially considering that those answers would have to be improvised.

On Tuesday, December 8, I met Sir Sidney Barton, who until recently was our Minister at Addis Ababa, after many years spent east of Suez. He and his wife had borne the burden and heat of the diplomatic day for three years in Ethiopia : he had, in addition, borne the brunt,

on the spot, of the *débâcle* of the League. It was not a good country to live in, even for Ethiopians, but to Africans all over the world it represented the germ of an ideal—a free African State: it was not, and never would be, a rich country, but, under wise guidance, it might in time have become prosperous. Italian immigration, if it ever attained any volume, would entail the creation of yet another minority, destined one day to be as embarrassing and no more productive of good than the Zionist minority in Palestine or the German settlers in Tanganyika and elsewhere in Africa.

The victory of Italy had not been welcome to Germany: it was looked at askance by France. It was represented by Mussolini as destined to parry Japanese inroads into Africa, but Italy had readily recognised their 'economic interests,' which were as yet scarcely material, in return for their recognition of Italian sovereignty. The psychological reactions in the East and in Africa would one day become apparent: they would necessarily affect Great Britain, France and Belgium, perhaps profoundly.

I spent two hours that morning at the House in Standing Committee on Marriage Law Reform. One of the disadvantages attendant on membership of such a Committee is the stream of distressing letters, occasioned by the brief reports in the newspapers of our deliberations. Each one is a hard case—a record of human frailty, or cruelty or vice, and often of the sorry workings of an unequal law in a legal framework which, more than in most countries, is designed, like a certain Indian remedy, 'for Princes and rich men only.' This ineluctable fact is well known to lawyers, but is consistently ignored by them, particularly in debate in the Commons. 'Poor Persons Rules' touch the merest fringe of the mass of aggrieved persons who can never hope for justice because they lack means. Solicitors and barristers who, with fine public spirit, undertake gratuitous work under the

Rules, cannot deal with more than a fraction of the cases (other than divorce) which deserve attention. The lot of men and women of small means is not less unenviable: the scales are weighted against them from the outset to the end. A firm dealing with hire-purchase contracts can take out, deliver, and see through the court a hundred judgment summonses at a cost no greater than is incurred by a private person in defending one.

That evening (December 8) I was the guest, by reason of a long-standing engagement, of a City Company at a banquet. I expected to hear that it had been cancelled, but misjudged my hosts. Unlike the simple folk whom I had met on the previous Friday, the distinguished company were out to enjoy an excellent dinner. At the proper moment the Worshipful Master with customary ceremony proposed the King's health, saying no word in reference to what we all knew or feared was happening. A hired singer, with a beautiful voice, sang the first verse of the National Anthem: it was repeated by a chorus of male tenors and baritones: the tension was unendurable to me. She sang the third verse (what authority and what justification there may be for omitting on all public occasions the second, I know not), and the company, as the custom is, joined in on the last stanzas, as the band crashed in. It was too much for me: foolish tears coursed down my cheeks. I excused myself as soon as I could.

The sense of tragedy was deepening. The light of hope grew dim. The coming and going of the Prime Minister and other of the King's servants, of the Queen-Mother, and of other members of the Royal Family were faithfully chronicled. Speculation, in many forms, was rife: the Stock Exchange was benumbed; but outside Westminster Abbey the sound of the hammer cheered many, and men were at work on grand-stands in the Mall.

Wednesday (December 9) passed with no relief

whatever to the public anxiety, and hope grew very dim. Those with whom I talked agreed that the Prime Minister had done all he could, and that nothing more could be done: their first thoughts now were for the Queen, and for Mr. Baldwin. Would King George's second son succeed to the throne under his father's name or would he, on grounds of health, refuse, with the result that his eldest daughter would succeed, under a long Regency? Of such matters the newspapers said little or nothing, but men thought and said much.

In the early months of a Session Wednesday is reserved for Private Members, who ballot for the right to start a debate, on a given topic, at a fortnight's notice. The lot fell on the second Wednesday of the month on Mr. Gerald Palmer, who raised the general question of recruiting. The debate, to which I made a modest contribution, was well sustained for nearly four hours in an almost empty House. But for the element of publicity, which is assumed to invest such discussions with a certain importance, the same effect would have been produced without waste of Parliamentary time, if those with something to say had met the Secretary of State for War in a private room upstairs. The popular Press accorded to the whole debate about one-eighth of a column. Yet the Regular Army was already 20,000, the Territorial 40,000 men, short of an establishment far below pre-war!

I went home that night by a late train: the only other passenger in the compartment was a well-dressed man of twenty-five or so; his large, strong hands were clean but stained. We exchanged papers; and I asked what had brought him to town this day. He was, he said, a plasterer—a master man, he added with a touch of pride. It had been frosty this morning and he had knocked off work: it meant a loss to him but he had a reputation and he would not imperil it. The crisis had given him and his

wife 'the hump,' so he had induced her to leave the children with a friend and go with him to town 'for a jolly' and to get some things for Christmas. They had had a good dinner and been to a good play. He felt the better for it. She was in a 'Ladies Only' compartment, gossiping with two friends.

The talk turned on the building trade in general and the technique of plastering in particular. He had followed in his father's footsteps as soon as he left school, but could not remember when he began to learn it: he had played with the instruments of his craft and with plaster in the backyard almost as soon as he could walk. In the spring, as a lad, he and his brothers (he was the youngest of a family of thirteen, of whom ten were living) were sent out by his father to collect birds' eggs, which they blew, and kept in cotton wool, sorted according to sizes. They sometimes had as many as four or five hundred in stock. 'The Old Man' was often in demand at 'the big houses' to repair eighteenth-century cornices, of which bunches of grapes were a feature. He took with him a box of eggs, filled them with liquid plaster and let them harden. Then he patched and repaired the old work with his plaster eggs and made up new bunches. It was a trick of the trade of which he was proud.

Thursday, December 10, was the climax of the constitutional crisis. I spent two hours before luncheon, appropriately enough, in Standing Committee on the Marriage Law Reform Bill: by one o'clock the House was already fuller than even on Budget Day and at prayers no seat was vacant. The Chaplain asked God's blessing, for the last time, as we already realised, on Our Sovereign Lord King Edward: he recited the special prayer that is offered before business is begun. As it is not to be found in the Book of Common Prayer and is not generally known, I reproduce it below:

Almighty God, by whom alone Kings reign, and Princes decree

justice ; and from whom alone cometh all counsel, wisdom and understanding ; We thine unworthy servants, here gathered together in thy Name, do most humbly beseech thee to send down thy Heavenly Wisdome from above, to direct and guide us in all our consultations : And grant that, we having thy fear always before our eyes, and laying aside all private interests, prejudices, and partial affections, the result of all our counsels may be to the glory of thy blessed Name, the maintenance of true Religion and Justice, the safety, honour and happiness of the King, the publick wealth, peace and tranquillity of the Realm, and the Uniting and Knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within the same, in true Christian Love and Charity one towards another, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

Questions to Ministers showed that the nerves of Members were on edge : they laughed at anything—or nothing, and were noisier than is their wont. At twenty minutes to four the Prime Minister, who had entered, amid applause, a few minutes earlier, left his seat and, walking to the Bar of the House, announced to the Speaker :

‘ A message from the King, signed with his own hand.’

Then advancing, bowing at the gangway and again before the Mace, he handed the paper in his hand to the Clerk to pass it to the Speaker, who, rising from his seat, began to read it, in a tense silence. Those Members who were wearing their silk hats bared their heads to listen to the ‘ final and irrevocable ’ decision of the King to abdicate, and of the forthcoming succession of his brother, as George VI, to the throne. Then followed the Prime Minister’s recital of the immediate circumstances which gave rise to the decision. He spoke with restraint, but with little emotion : he was generous, perhaps over-generous. He criticised no one, still less did he seek to apportion blame.

His speech lasted for three-quarters of an hour, and after he had finished the sitting was suspended for an

hour and a half in order that Members might give due consideration to the Message received from His Majesty.

Every Member must have been conscious that whilst Mr. Baldwin had spoken truthfully, sincerely and plainly, as promised in his opening sentence, he had, by a masterly process of selection, and by studied under-emphasis, achieved what would be destined to rank as one of the greatest if not the greatest speech of his life in exposition, not in defence, of actions for which he had been throughout solely responsible, though in later stages the Cabinet had been kept informed. He showed little trace of the strain under which he must have been working at what he once called 'the most lonely job.' He had done what no dictator in Europe could have done, and he had done it quietly and alone without doubt as to the approval of the representative assembly in which he had so long sat and of the Members with whom he had so freely mingled and of the electors who sent them there.

I walked across Westminster Bridge into Southwark and went into an eating-house with a paper in my hand containing the news. A taxi-driver sitting next me began to talk. 'Oh dear, oh dear,' he began, 'to think that it should come to this after all he's done. I can't believe my eyes—but there it is—he's torn it.'

'What else could he do?' said I.

'It's gone too far, I suppose,' he replied, 'but Lord, I remember seeing him in France: I've seen him a score of times on the job. I thought we were going to have such a King as never was—and now!' His distress was obvious.

'It's his own choice and he's had plenty of time now. No one has forced it on him,' I urged.

'That's true,' he assented. 'I've known many a man chuck a job and his duty for a girl, that's straight, and that's what it is when all's said.'

I returned to the House in time to hear most of

Mr. Attlee's speech when the debate was resumed at 6 P.M. The King, he said, had the sympathy of all.

The leader of the Opposition was followed by Sir Archibald Sinclair and Mr. Churchill, Mr. Maxton, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Gallacher and Colonel Wedgwood. The last word was spoken, as was fitting, by Captain Sir Ian Fraser, D.S.O., who then sat for a London Borough. He has lost his sight from war service, but has the gift of fine speech.

I only want [he said] to say two things, not in any representative capacity, but as an old soldier. No group in the community enjoys to a greater degree the understanding, the sympathy and the good will of His Majesty than ex-service men. I am certain that they will feel not merely that they have lost one who has worked for them for a quarter of a century, but a personal friend. But no group has a deeper sense of the importance of stability and strength at difficult times. I feel certain that their loyalty to the Crown and their help to the new King will be unbounded and will be given in the greatest possible measure that lies in their power.

After a sitting which had lasted for just over three hours, the proceedings ended with the introduction of a Bill to give effect to His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication.

'In revolutions,' says Macaulay, 'men live fast: the experience of years is crowded into hours: old habits of thought and action are violently broken.'<sup>1</sup> In this sense, we passed during the first fortnight of December through a revolution. There were many aching hearts and tears in many eyes in the House of Commons and in the Strangers' Gallery as the Prime Minister spoke: they were the best answer to those who spoke, a few days later, of 'cant' and 'humbug.'

Thus ended the shortest reign of any British monarch since the ill-fated Edward V, over 450 years ago, was

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, ii. 504.



murdered, and thus did the fifty-fourth Parliament since the Act of Union with Scotland emerge with dignity and honour from the severest test in its history since the middle of the seventeenth century.

The King's Message to Parliament and the Prime Minister's speech, broadcast within a few minutes of its delivery, and reproduced in full by the evening papers in London and the great cities, came as a heavy blow to millions. They had, it is true, been prepared by the morning papers for such a possibility, but many had hoped that we might be spared from such an ending.

Had the blow fallen a few days earlier it would have aroused blind anger: even so, there was some outward indication of the conflicting loyalties which the news aroused in the hearts of simple folk who felt the loss most keenly.

'It is like a death in the family,' said one working man to me. 'It is worse,' said a second. The instinct to take sides had been strong earlier in the week: it was suppressed—by the very words of the King; but it will long remain in the minds of his former subjects as *dies tenebrosa, exspectationis angorisque plena*.

Friday, December 11, was another black day—there was sorrow still, but no indignation; regret, but no recriminations. Parliament passed the Abdication Bill through all its stages at a single sitting; the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party, the latter consisting of one, the former of three members, submitted a 'reasoned amendment' in favour of a republican form of government. Mr. Maxton made a good speech, as he generally can, but secured only five votes in a full House. The Labour Party supported the Bill officially and backed it in the Lobby, but, had there been a free vote, or a secret ballot, I fancy that forty or fifty votes would have been cast against it. The proportion of 400 to 5, however, probably overstates the amount of support that a repub-

lican programme would secure among the population at large.

The proceedings on the Bill, in all its stages, lasted some two hours in the Commons and some eight minutes in the Lords. Then followed, in the words of *The Times*, before the King's Commissioners, in eighteenth-century robes and three-cornered hats—

The last and most painful scene of the tragedy. Lord Onslow, summoning Black Rod, instructed him to let the Commons know that the Lords Commissioners desired their immediate attendance. This was quickly done, and in a few minutes the Speaker, followed by a crowd of grave-faced Ministers and members, was standing at the Bar. . . . The Reading Clerk, stepping from his place to the right of the table, bowed low, spread open a vast parchment splashed with the red of the Great Seal, and slowly read out the authorisation 'by the King himself, signed with his own hand.' . . . The solemn words 'His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act' rang through the silent House.

The Reading Clerk turned and faced the Commissioners. On the other side of the table the Clerk of the Parliaments also took his stand; and was required to pronounce the Royal Assent in the usual words. He turned about, and the last act of King Edward's reign was consummated with the words '*Le Roy le veult.*'

Eight minutes later Big Ben struck two.

That night, in my constituency, I was present at a sober gathering of 200 or more men and women of all ages, mostly earning less than £3 a week. We listened at ten o'clock to the broadcast of Prince Edward from Windsor Castle, which was arranged, and relayed to the world, by the British Broadcasting Corporation on their own responsibility. Never did they take a wiser decision. The text of his farewell message was as follows:

At long last I am able to say a few words of my own. I have never wanted to withhold anything, but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak.

A few hours ago I discharged my last duty as King and Emperor, and now that I have been succeeded by my brother, the Duke of York, my first words must be to declare my allegiance to him. This I do with all my heart.

You all know the reasons which have impelled me to renounce the Throne. But I want you to understand that in making up my mind I did not forget the country or the Empire which as Prince of Wales, and lately as King, I have for twenty-five years tried to serve. But you must believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love.

And I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine and mine alone. This was a thing I had to judge entirely for myself. The other person most nearly concerned has tried up to the last to persuade me to take a different course. I have made this, the most serious decision of my life, only upon the single thought of what would in the end be best for all.

This decision has been made less difficult to me by the sure knowledge that my brother, with his long training in the public affairs of this country and with his fine qualities, will be able to take my place forthwith, without interruption or injury to the life and progress of the Empire. And he has one matchless blessing, enjoyed by so many of you and not bestowed on me—a happy home with his wife and children.

During these hard days I have been comforted by Her Majesty my mother and by my family. The Ministers of the Crown, and in particular Mr. Baldwin, the Prime Minister, have always treated me with full consideration. There has never been any constitutional difference between me and them and between me and Parliament. Bred in the constitutional tradition by my father, I should never have allowed any such issue to arise.

Ever since I was Prince of Wales, and later on when I occupied the Throne, I have been treated with the greatest kindness by all classes of the people, wherever I have lived or journeyed throughout the Empire. For that I am very grateful.

I now quit altogether public affairs, and I lay down my burden.

It may be some time before I return to my native land, but I shall always follow the fortunes of the British race and Empire with profound interest, and if at any time in the future I can be found of service to His Majesty in a private station I shall not fail.

And now we all have a new King. I wish him, and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all.

### God Save the King.

As I listened, standing among a crowd of simple folk of all ages, solemn-faced and silent, many, as they told me, with aching hearts, and some in tears, the reference of Lord Rosebery to another tragic occasion rang like a bell in my ears :

It is a black moment when the Heralds proclaim the passing of the dead, and the great Officers break their staves : it is a blacker moment still when the victim's own voice proclaims his decadence, and the victim's own hands break the staff in public.

In my pocket was a letter written from a tenement in a city of Ireland :

I, who am no loyalist, feel drowned in tears for this so tragic figure—this King who is too honest and too nobly foolish for kingship. There is a splendour in his folly, in his gesture of renunciation and in his selfless effort towards oblivion, that makes my heart beat in sympathy with him.

There was no more broadcasting that night. The working men around me were relieved beyond measure that they themselves had heard with their own ears the authentic voice of their former King : his words set at ease many minds which would otherwise have harboured doubts. Many longed to hear his mother, Queen Mary, also : thought of her was uppermost in all minds, and her message had aroused yet deeper sympathy than that of her eldest son. It was issued on Thursday night, December 10, and ran as follows :

I have been so deeply touched by the sympathy which has

surrounded me at this time of anxiety that I must send a message of gratitude from the depth of my heart. The sympathy and affection which sustained me in my great sorrow less than a year ago have not failed me now, and are once again my strength and stay.

I need not speak to you of the distress which fills a mother's heart when I think that my dear son has deemed it to be his duty to lay down his charge and that the reign which had begun with so much hope and promise has so suddenly ended. I know that you will realise what it has cost him to come to this decision; and that, remembering the years in which he tried so eagerly to serve and help his country and Empire, you will ever keep a grateful remembrance of him in your hearts.

I commend to you his brother, summoned so unexpectedly and in circumstances so painful to take his place. I ask you to give to him the same full measure of generous loyalty which you gave to my beloved husband and which you would willingly have continued to give to his brother.

With him I commend my dear daughter-in-law who will be his Queen. May she receive the same unfailing affection and trust which you have given to me for six and twenty years. I know that you have already taken her children to your hearts.

It is my earnest prayer that, in spite of, nay through, this present trouble, the loyalty and unity of our land and Empire may by God's blessing be maintained and strengthened. May He bless and keep and guide you always.

MARY R.

### THE ACCESSION

On Saturday morning the Officers of Arms, gorgeous in their tabards, proclaimed George VI King, first at the Palace of Saint James, then in succession at Charing Cross, Temple Bar, and the Royal Exchange.

In the morning the King attended the Accession meeting of the Privy Council, which 'gave orders for proclaiming His Majesty.'

Thus there succeeded to the Throne for the sixth time a Duke of York. King George VI's forty-first birthday fell three days later, on December 14, but will be kept officially on June 9. He was married, on April 26, 1923, to Queen Elizabeth, who, as Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, is the daughter of a Scottish earl of ancient line, and was born on August 4, 1900. There are two children of the marriage—Princess Elizabeth, born on April 21, 1926, and Princess Margaret, born on August 21, 1930.

Both King George and Queen Elizabeth have been active in many branches of our national life: their interest in social questions is genuine and discerning. Both are widely known and respected in every part of the kingdom and enjoy those almost indispensable qualities of their respective stations—a remarkable memory for names and faces, and the ability to radiate happiness and inspire enthusiasm.

Thus ended, within a fortnight, a tempest which, in any other great country, would have imperilled the foundations of government. Action necessitating consultation with overseas Governments was taken after calm deliberation but with a swiftness which no despotic or totalitarian State could emulate. Every State document, every responsible utterance, was drafted and delivered with a sureness of touch and a simplicity which is the hall-mark of skilled statesmanship.

Once more the House of Commons proved itself to be, in the prophetic words of *The Times* of November 30, 'what the country has often required in similar times during its long history, but has seldom been given—namely, a Council of State, which is able to demonstrate its solid strength in any crisis which may arise, whether foreign or domestic.' The event has, moreover, proved beyond cavil that, when political parties so desire, the parliamentary machine can work with unrivalled speed. I am not alone in hoping that the achievement will

encourage Ministers to display like qualities in initiating and disposing of urgent domestic legislation which lies, piled high upon the wharves of Westminster, awaiting clearance.

Saturday, December 12, was felt by many to bear the same relation to the days that went before as does Easter to Holy Week. Money flowed again, the crowds who gathered to hear the Royal Proclamation of Accession by the Officers of Arms in their tabards—of all uniforms the most becoming to men of all ages—were smiling again.

Christmas shopping began that day in earnest. The crisis was over. I dined and spoke again that night to a gathering of a hundred allotment holders and their guests. It was a cold collation, but not the less hearty for that. The talk already turned on the coming Coronation: men and women were vowing they would make it a real success.

On the following Sunday evening I heard as good a sermon as I can remember for a long time. The text was from the *Magnificat*, the purport that Fear was the ruling emotion among heathen savages in Borneo, where the preacher's brother worked as a missionary, and Fear was, of set purpose, adopted as the ruling motive of some forms of government. To banish irrational fear from our midst was the task of education, the aim of religion; it should be the aim of medicine, for every doctor knew how profound were its effects upon mind and body. How much more should it be the aim of our social and judicial systems. Fear was a valuable provision of nature to prevent the young from heedless steps which might have fatal consequences, just as pain was often nature's messenger, warning us of some disharmony or maladjustment which might be dangerous if left unattended. It was very different from prudence. Love alone could cast out fear: it did so daily.

I left the church feeling the better for what I had heard and with the sense of unity which a church service, attended by men and women young and old, who know and are known to each other, always gives me.

On Monday, December 14, I dined with and afterwards spoke to a small group of City men on 'Working-Class Insurance' against sickness, accident and death—or, rather, against a pauper funeral, which is what is meant by Industrial Assurance. My thesis was that these social services should be run by the State, and not for profit. That no one now suggested that compulsory insurance against old age through a State-managed agency was wrong in principle and that it should be managed commercially on a profit-making basis. It was time to apply the same principles to sickness, accident and death—by which last I referred to 'burial money.' These were, in most civilised countries, under State control and management and were far more cheaply managed, and gave greater benefits.

The National Health Insurance Acts are administered by 6600 overlapping societies and actuarially independent branches, having no relations with or responsibilities towards public health bodies in any given locality. The contributions are fixed: benefits vary grotesquely from one society to another. Medical benefit was universal, dental and other equally necessary services were 'additional.' The whole system required overhauling. Workmen's compensation was also defective—very costly to work, very arbitrary, often cruelly unjust in action, and entirely unrelated to local public health services. The treatment of silicosis cases under schemes and the various Acts was little short of a public scandal.

On December 18 I was the guest of a Conservative Working Men's Club. The fare was simple as usual, beef or pork, with vegetables and pickles, cheese and beer.



The room was crowded, the air was so heavy with smoke that I could scarcely see the faces of those at the back. The musical and comic items were of unequal merit, but the performers were members or local residents and gave me, for one, more pleasure than any wireless broadcast.

One speaker who preceded me spoke with real eloquence and received due applause. I studied the faces of the audience from the platform, and noted what stirred and what pleased them; I felt that but little separates us from our Saxon and Elizabethan forbears. There was the same honest simplicity, and the same ready response to sentiment and to rough humour that permeated the Nativity Plays of an earlier day. As T. E. Brown says somewhere in his 'Letters':

There are nice Rabelaisians and there are nasty Rabelaisians, but the nasty ones are not followers of Rabelais.

Not one of these men, not one of the jokes they enjoyed was 'nasty.' One member urged me to help him to get his military pension paid weekly; another to get some allowance to make it possible for his son, who had fought at Jutland and was now in a mental hospital, to have a few such luxuries as tobacco, and eggs and bacon for breakfast as a 'paying patient', instead of slabs of bread and margarine. The poor man longed for the better food that others had, and felt the 'pauper taint' that clung to those less well treated. His affliction was attributed by his father to war service; but the Ministry of Pensions said that it was not *directly* so attributable. I promised in each case to do what I could. I left the Club soon after I had spoken, to meet by appointment at a tea-shop two reservists who, on return from Palestine, were aggrieved that they could not regain their former employment, and later, in a nearby hotel, their employer, to whom I had written.

Both sides were reasonable: the men admitted that they had never mentioned that they were reservists:

they were not asked, and it did not occur to them. They had been with their last employer, who had twenty men on his pay-roll, for a year: they were free to leave him at any time, or he to dismiss them, at a month's notice. When work was slack he often stood off a few men. They had returned from Palestine in November: he had been unable to find room for them, and refused to dismiss those whom he had taken on in July to fill their places. This was their complaint: the Trade Union gave them no encouragement, the Branch Secretary had called them fools for enlisting. The Employment Exchange would probably give them preference, but they had been 'out' for a month.

The employer, a quarter of an hour later, disclaimed any ill-will towards the two men. He would take them on again when work was available, but he would not reinstate them at the expense of others: it would create a sense of injustice! He had not promised to do so: as workers they were just 'good average' men, and would have left him readily if anyone else offered them a better wage. Why should he carry the burden that the nation should share? Firms employing mostly women were saved these inconveniences. It was up to the Government to make regulations which would encourage employers to employ reservists on condition that they were reinstated on return to civil life.

I was summoned on December 22 by telephone to give blood, to a constituent as it happened, in Hitchin hospital. It was, so far as I could reckon, my twenty-sixth time and all went, as usual, smoothly. The whole 'operation' does not take over twenty minutes: no pain to speak of, no bandaging, no faintness. One minute after the blood-letting I was putting on my coat, and went forthwith round the men's wards. One in four were road accident cases, broken arms and legs; one old man had fallen and broken his arm, but did not know it till, a

week later, it began to swell and a radio photo showed it badly fractured. In the next bed was a smiling, cheerful youth of nineteen, married, with one child, who had hurt his knee badly at work ; next door an old bricklayer who had fallen off a scaffolding. There was a carpenter who had a hernia, which began when he was 'easing' a window, and another man with a poisoned finger, which started when he was at work.

Most of these were compensation cases in the earliest stage. What each man wanted above all was to get fit for work again. What the hospital wanted was (1) to get him sufficiently fit for discharge, and (2) to get him fit to work. What the Insurance Company wanted was to pay as small a sum as possible by way of compensation and, eventually, to 'get him off their books' if he appeared likely to be permanently disabled. This is a subject too controversial and difficult to be discussed in a diary, but it is well to remember what an immensely important factor accident insurance is to-day. How badly it is working, from the point of view of the working classes, the evidence now being given before two Departmental Committees testifies.

I left London that evening to perform a pleasant task at Knebworth, where I was billed to introduce 'with a few kind words' a Christmas mystery play, *Bethlehem*, by Rutland Boughton, produced by Christopher Ede with a local cast. The play must be almost as old as Christianity itself—one of a cycle of forty-two plays which are connected with Coventry but may have started in Lincoln. The MS. dates from 1468, but it merely recorded what had long been current *per ora virum*. The cast was the better for being drawn, as tradition requires, almost entirely from Knebworth itself.

This play reminds us that we are each of us individually a link between a long past and a long future. The words *Adeste fideles* are a call to the dead as well as to the living,

for we and they are one, and a nation lives in the past as well as in the present. Our civilisation is based on Christ's teaching, however imperfectly practised, and every gift, dramatic, musical and artistic, may find scope in conveying that message.

These plays were meant to teach: but were also intended to bring every sort of person together. The theme of the whole cycle is Christian—they link the career of individuals as integral parts of the social organism, and of the religious whole.

They were meant to show, as Disraeli makes one of his characters say in *Coningsby*, that the trade guilds, working class and peasantry were

as ancient, legal and recognised an order as the order of the nobility . . . with distinct rights and privileges,

not lightly to be invaded, and with duties also.

I concluded with the words of Theseus in *Midsummer Night's Dream*:

I will hear that play,  
For never anything can be amiss  
When simpleness and duty tender it.  
Go: bring them in, and take your place, ladies.

'Every child,' I said, 'born into the world is a pledge to humanity that God does not despair of man, that men and women have confidence in each other and in the future of the world.'

Mr. de Valera's broadcast on Christmas Eve was of exceptional importance.

In the political sphere [he said] our aspirations are being realised. It is now clear that our political institutions in this part of Ireland are free from the suggestions of outside control. In the New Year our people will be able to frame for themselves the constitution under which they are to live. The partition of our country will then remain the one formidable barrier to that peace internally

and that peace with our neighbour that which we so desire. . . . We wish to be on terms of friendship with the people of Britain as with all other peoples, and obstacles to that friendship are being removed one by one. I look forward to the day when they will all have disappeared. . . .

It was the speech of a statesman, sure of himself and of the support of those for whom he spoke. Everything that has happened at home and abroad has turned out or has been utilised by him to his advantage. He seems to me to be far in advance of his own supporters—but not so far that he cannot lead them.

The new Dean of St. Paul's, on the other hand, was reported by *The Times* under the heading THE WAY OF PEACE to have expressed the hope that the religion to which we should return, as desired by the Archbishop, would be

of the kind that put down the tyrant from his seat and raised up the humble and meek.

'The tyrant' is an unjustified substitution for 'the mighty' in the *Magnificat*. The reference is quite clear—it is to those of 'the rich' who wrongly direct the accumulation and distribution of wealth. In that sense the Dean is right: but this is not the way of peace, nor was it in the mind of the Archbishop.

The bell-ringers of the church which we usually attend, in a village nearby, came as usual on Christmas Eve to play a long selection of carol tunes on hand bells—a vast improvement to most ears on the usual performance of waits—and to take a glass of wine with the family afterwards. The clear notes of the bells through still air recall many memories and arouse emotions—but in the hearts only of the people of these islands, for the art of bell-ringing as practised in England is unknown abroad and has taken root only in a few English-speaking countries.

It is a skilled art: the monopoly of the English working class; it makes a heavy demand on their leisure hours at a time when most men desire to rest. It has never been taken up by sophisticated persons—undergraduates, Oxford Groupists and the like—the finer points are understood only by very few, yet, more perhaps than any other single item of the English countryside, it has been for some four hundred years a treasured possession alike of churchgoers and others.

The last day of the year is nowadays celebrated in England by Scots who, having made the most of our Christmas Day, which they formerly scorned to observe as a holiday, invite us to their festivities on Hogmanay. The word and the custom are of French origin, surviving in Normandy as *hoguinane*, and in slightly different form in Guernsey and Spain. In Old French it reads *aguillanneuf*, ‘au guy l’an neuf’ = ‘to the mistletoe, the New Year.’

The first references to it in print are in the late seventeenth century, when it means the gift of an oatcake on the eve of the New Year. Thus J. Nichol (1805):

The cottar weanies, glad an’ gay  
Sing at the doors for hogmanay.

It was and still is current in Yorkshire and Newcastle. R. Chambers in *Popular Rhymes* quotes:

Get up good wife and shake your feathers  
And dinna think that we are beggars,  
For we are bairns come out to play,  
Get up and gie’s our hogmanay.

Expensive revels are fashionable this year. I extract from *The Times*:

Fifteen hundred guests will gather to-night at Grosvenor House, where the great ballroom has been decorated to represent a forest

in winter. Electrically illuminated trees will reach to the ceiling. A new cabaret entertainment will be presented, and in addition 200 children will take part in a spectacle, 'John Bull's greeting to the world,' which will welcome the New Year. The revels will include a gala supper and dancing. Special attractions for to-night at the Savoy, Claridge's, the Ritz, the Carlton, the Berkeley, and the Trocadero were outlined in *The Times* yesterday, and many other hotels and restaurants have arranged dinner-dances, supper-dances, and cabaret performances. Thousands will be present in fancy dress at the Chelsea Arts Club Ball, to be held in the Albert Hall.

This, I suppose, is regarded as 'Christmas with Christ,' for, a few days later, *The Times* printed under the heading 'Christmas without Christ' a scornful reference to Christmas celebrations in Germany, from their Own Correspondent, himself an agnostic.

I played my part as a guest at a more homely gathering in the constituency, but was back in time to step from my study on to the lawn in the light of an almost full moon to hear the bells of Widford Church ring out the Old and ring in the New Year. I first heard this at Rochdale in 1890 when I was six years old.

*Recordare, Jesu pie :  
Quod sum causa Tuæ viae  
Ne me perdas illa die :  
Ora supplex et acclinis  
Cor contritum quasi cinis :  
Gere curam mei finis.*

'Let us work while it is day, for the night cometh. This was my New Year's vow : I turned in, after enjoying for a time the sharp shadows of the yew trees and gaunt oaks and beeches on the grass, feeling grateful to the bell-ringers as they joyfully clashed the bells. They had a long walk back to their homes.

## CHAPTER XXI

JANUARY 1937

Let us look at the good future of man with some faith in it, and capacity to regard current phases of history without letting our sensations blind and bewilder us.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

*The Times Review of the Year 1930* described it as one on which it is possible for few to look back with satisfaction—‘a period of depression from which the immediate future promises no relief.’ 1931 was ‘an *annus mirabilis* in the wrong sense, to be noted perhaps in the future as a Black Year in the history of the world.’ It was conceded twelve months later that ‘to a depressed and frustrated world it cannot be said that 1932 brought no prospect of relief . . . to review the complicated struggles of the last twelve months without reference to the future would certainly be to paint a blacker picture than is justified.

‘To a world worn by the economic and political shocks of the last few years’ 1933 brought ‘perceptible relief. The fundamental causes of the economic storm . . . have not been removed: there is not even general agreement in the diagnosis of these causes . . . but there are at least some encouraging signs of economic improvement . . . the beginnings of recovery have become apparent.’ 1934 was ‘a year of many discomforts and afflictions. On more than one occasion it seemed that peace was preserved only by the League of Nations and mutual dread . . . but, as they surveyed the plight of



others, the inhabitants of Great Britain might congratulate themselves that, for all its faults, theirs was still the best country to live in.'

1935 ended 'under a sky not clear of ill-omened signs—the danger if not the certainty of war; of war between two members of the League of Nations, not in Europe itself but on a field closely affecting European relations' . . . destined to 'test the strength, the utility and, perhaps, the further durability of the already impaired League of Nations.'

As for 1936, their record of that year, still fresh in our memories, 'can be laid down with the feeling that it might have been worse.'

In fact, in the words of Spenser's Shepherd,

Thus must the world wend his allotted course  
From good to bad, from bad to worse.

I have for many years collected in a portfolio successive issues of *The Times* 'Review of the Year' as the handiest compendium of strictly contemporary history. A set of these reviews is a luxury which every elementary school and every home can afford: they do not, of course, compete with *The Annual Register*, a matchless publication which perhaps in some far distant days will be recognised by those specialists in a dead past who mainly control our public examinations and, therefore, the compulsory intellectual activities of our youth, as no less suitable set books than history books dealing with medieval periods. It was said of Whewell that 'knowledge was his forte and omniscience his foible,' but, wiser than some of his successors, he prided himself on bringing his pupils into touch with the world in which they would have to live. One who knew J. R. Green well once said to me that he tried to focus all history on a point which lay always a little ahead of his own day, and if his mind, like a prism, displayed the white light of history as consisting of strange colours, it revealed beauty and meaning to many simple

souls. That is what a growing public asks of historians to-day.

On December 31 a member of the Royal Family went to a phrenologist in Fleet Street with a lady, the wife of a friend. He was seen by a Press photographer. On January 1 the *Daily Express* devoted part of its front page to photographs of the Duke leaving the place, and to an interview with the phrenologist. This was followed on January 2 with a large photograph of the lady who accompanied H.R.H., with the caption 'Who is she?'—answered at length in due course.

The *Evening Standard*, under the same ownership, devoted half a column of gossip to the subject of the Royal Family and phrenology on the same day, and, on January 16, a further half-column to lamenting the consequences of the publicity given to the incident, without, of course, referring to its own share therein or to that of its partner.

On January 18 the following letter to the Editor appeared in *The Times*:

In connection with the Press persecution initiated as the result of a casual and utterly harmless visit of my wife to a phrenologist in company with a member of the Royal family, I should like to record the fact in your columns that my mother-in-law, an elderly lady in weak health living alone, has been reduced to a state of nervous exhaustion by the relentless attentions of reporters both on the telephone and at her front door. I have now arranged for her protection and a warm reception for any further visitors.

If 'the liberty of the Press' in this country is to be expressed in the form of the persecution of individuals of all classes of the community—for the same treatment is extended to the victims of minor incidents in poorer homes—it is high time that measures were taken by Parliament to put some restraint upon a licence which amounts to an intolerable and ever-growing scandal. Otherwise certain individuals, who have grown rich upon the ruthless exploitation of other people's private lives, will find that they have

come into conflict with men who are not in such a helpless position as some who have recently been tortured on the wheel of the yellow Press.

The *Daily Express* and *Evening Standard* are owned by Lord Beaverbrook, 1st Baron ; created 1917, for political and public services. Author of *Success*, 1921 ; *Politicians and the Press*, 1927.

In mentioning these two papers, however, I do not wish to be understood as suggesting that they are more blameworthy than some others. On the contrary, Sir Water Layton's oleaginous apologia at a Liberal Summer School a few months later not merely carried no conviction but made his case appear worse than before.

On January 25, in the House of Commons, Sir W. Davison asked Sir John Simon whether his attention had been drawn to the remarks of the coroner in the case of an inquest on January 19 as to the persecution by representatives of the Press in this and other cases of the relatives of the people who die under tragic circumstances ; and whether any steps could be taken by the Government for the protection of citizens from such Press persecution.

Sir John Simon replied as follows :

. . . The coroner in the case referred to observed that all decent people must sympathise with the relatives in the distress which was caused to the bereaved family by the way in which they were persecuted by such inquiries, and I must say that the responsible heads of the Press may devise a means of preventing the repetition of such incidents by sternly discouraging such mistaken and heartless enterprise. I am proposing to communicate with the Newspaper Proprietors' Associations and the Newspaper Society on the subject.

Sir W. Davison, in a supplementary question, mentioned that the family had been harassed by the Press at a time of great personal sorrow and the widow had been called from her bed at 1 A.M. by a Press representative asking for information as to the tragedy.

It is not surprising that Parliament, a few weeks later, refused to grant a second reading to a Bill to render the law of libel less onerous than at present to newspaper proprietors. It is useless to blame reporters, who well know that they will be dismissed at a moment's notice if they fail to play the part allotted to them as a matter of high policy by those who control them. But a few prosecutions of reporters for causing annoyance, or for trespass or mischief, might help.

On January 4 I was the guest of the Junior Imperial League in a small village—some thirty young men and women, aged from eighteen to twenty-five, sat down, with their guests, to cold meat, with beer, pickles, cold pudding and apples. Tea and coffee came later. The Press were absent—not wholly to my regret—for, whilst the provincial Press reports are, in my experience, thoroughly reliable and impartial, they inevitably, and indeed properly, on occasions, give prominence to some picturesque phrase or exaggeration which, delivered with a smile to a laughing audience, conveys a very different impression in print.

After supper, and the speeches, talk became general. Surely to grow more food at home was as good a defence and as necessary as a strong Navy. It was not easy to serve one's country, even in the Territorials. Employers should be compelled to give extra leave even without pay while a man was at camp. Government should be less particular in selecting recruits. Why should not retired officers and ex-service men, even of fifty years of age, be eligible for anti-aircraft work? Compulsion all round would not be resented, provided that it was fairly applied; the most essential men in time of war would be those who could till the soil and milk cattle. The towns and great cities, the distributive and luxury trades should provide the men first. 'Tell us what to do,' said one, 'and we'll do it all right: it's no good just leaving it to

George.' A voluntary Army, he explained, was in competition with other professions and must be paid accordingly.

We talked of football pools: it was a 'mug's game,' but also 'the poor man's Cross-word, with a kick in it.' It costs the participants from 6d. a week upwards (plus postage), and they are satisfied that they get a square deal, and they are probably right—at least, so far as concerns the larger firms; though there is, at present, no sort of compulsory audit or control, such as is exercised over betting on dogs and horses. They know that the profits are large—they do not care: they disliked the restrictions imposed on race-course betting, they resented the persecution of street bookmakers by the police, who resort to very devious methods to secure conviction. The average man was pleased when football pool promoters contrived to get round the law. He fell a ready victim to the parrot cries of those who were exploiting the system that the 'kill-joys' were seeking to impose, on the poor, restrictions unknown to the rich. Members of Parliament, as the figures in the division lobby show, listened all too readily.

Certain daily and Sunday papers derive large sums from publishing advertisements of the pool-betting firms. The circulations of many others must benefit largely, for enthusiasts have to study the 'form' of teams and individual players as a guide in making their selections, often with the aid, it seems, of 'statistical instruments' at 5s. each. The Press are therefore behind the movement, and it has had powerful support from that deservedly popular broadcaster and journalist Professor John Hilton, of Cambridge University, whose pamphlet *Why I go in for Pools*, by Tom, Dick and Harry (letters written to John Hilton), whatever its intention, is regarded by the man in the street as endorsing his objection to any interference with pools whatever the Football Association or the National Anti-Gambling League may say. The Foot-

ball Association tried, in fact, to check it, and failed: they felt that the ultimate moral and financial effect on professional football was bound to be disastrous, for the pools deal only with sixty-four matches played weekly by the English and Scottish Leagues. There is some indication that they are right.

There is also 'Pontoon'—*i.e.* a sweepstake gained by the person whose team (assigned by lot) is the first to secure an aggregate of eleven goals. Many daily and weekly papers publish 'Full Pontoon Tables.' It is a legal means of initiating the young into the joys of betting.

The sums won by either method may be large: £11,000 has been paid on a penny bet; £400 or £500 is frequently paid on a 6d. entry. The smaller prizes are very numerous: the Press and the Postmaster-General are, after the promoters, the principal beneficiaries, and, of course, the sole channels whereby the trade is conducted. Once a person has sent in a coupon, he will get a blank coupon weekly for the rest of the season and, perhaps, for the next one.

Nothing is likely to be done. The majority Report of the Royal Commission on Lotteries recommended the prohibition of office betting on the pool system in terms which would make all football pool betting illegal: the minority Report favoured complete suppression of football coupon betting on the representation of the Football Associations, on the ground that these Associations were engaged in beneficent work of national value which was being exploited by betting interests for financial gain. But public opinion and the bulk of the Press were, and still are, almost solidly against any intervention. The majority play for safety, and save what they can; a minority (not morally or socially inferior), sickened with the monotony of life at a dead level, with no hope of advancement, envious of those better off than themselves, who can give their wives a new dress, their children new clothes, who can take the family off to the

sea for a week-end by car or motor-cycle, 'try their luck.' The reward when it comes is immediate; it is just as 'right' to earn money in this as in any other way. Stockbrokers divide their clients into not dissimilar groups.

I went during the first week in January to a small house in the back street of a market town, where dwelt a young man whose interests I had been asked to safeguard so far as I could. He was just twenty-one; he was married to a good-looking wife, and had two children. Nearly a year ago he had injured his knee while at work as a labourer; for nine months he had been in and out of hospital and the doctors had not yet finished with him. They could not yet say whether he would be able to work again. Had he been unemployed he would have been entitled to 32s., but he was only getting half-pay, which came to only 24s., though with piece-work or overtime he had earned 60s. most weeks. He was entitled to 5s. a week from his Approved Society for twenty-six weeks. They had paid him 5s. for some thirty weeks; then, finding their mistake, had told him that he could draw nothing until the arrears were wiped off. His rent was 5s. a week and he was not in arrears, but the children in his own words 'had not got all they needed since his benefit was cut' and were poorly. One had whooping-cough and neither he nor they could sleep.

But these facts, though material to his case, did not touch the point at issue, which was compensation for his injury. A pleasant-spoken young man from the Insurance Company had seen him some months ago and 'offered to settle the case' for a lump sum. It seemed a lot, for his knee was healing, and he had visions of a 'nice little business' in partnership with a greengrocer; he signed the agreement placed before him, but the Registrar of the County Court, in consultation with the doctor, had refused to confirm it—and a good thing too, for ten days

later his knee went wrong again and he had to go to hospital for another operation. A bit of bone had been taken out: the joint hurt still, and creaked: he feared he might never again be able to do the heavy work for which his strong healthy frame fitted him. He was afraid, too, that the muscles of the leg were beginning to waste for lack of use, for he had been on crutches for nearly a year.

The Insurance Company had put in a new offer, but the doctor and the Registrar had told him that the final decision could not yet be made. Meanwhile, he felt himself going downhill physically: he could pay for his food, but there was nothing left for clothes: he could meet the rent, but not the cost of renewing household equipment. Could I help in any way?

I promised to try, and left the town by train pondering on what I had seen and heard. He has fallen by the way for no fault of his own. He had the reputation, as I had ascertained elsewhere, of being sober, hard-working, a good husband and father, a steady workman. Put into good clothes he would pass anywhere as belonging to a far higher social category than that in which fortune had placed him. His speech was pleasant and easy: he made no complaints; he had no grievance, as yet, against 'the system.' He had married wisely, and if he had taken a wife before he was twenty-one it was true, as he said, that he would never again earn any more as long as he lived, so the sooner he 'settled down' the better, and the sooner the children grew up the easier it would be for him when at the age of forty or so he passed the peak of employability. The Social Services had done something for him, but there was a gap between Workmen's Compensation, National Health, and Unemployment Insurance that it should not pass the wit of man to bridge. Of local charitable organisations he had no knowledge: anyway he objected to charity. He was C. of E., but had never seen the vicar or curate since he was married.



On Saturday morning I was in attendance at a Children's Court. The Superintendent and constables, familiar figures to the youngest villagers, appeared in plain clothes. The case was heard in a billiard room as we could not, by law, use the Public Hall which usually serves as a Court. 'The child'—a healthy girl of sixteen—was accused, with her mother, of having stolen a pair of shoes belonging to another girl from the village hall after a dance.

The defence was that she had not worn them: she had put them in her bag by mistake: she had discovered her error on the Monday and had intended to return them and said so to her mother, who had wrapped them up, but, the weather being wet, and she being busy with four children, they were still in the house on Thursday when the constable called. Case dismissed. If this sort of charge is general I am not surprised that statistics show an increase of juvenile crime.

On Monday, January 11, after a heavy morning's work and a business lunch, I went to Portsmouth to address some fifty officers on the active list of the Royal Navy on 'The Working of the Social Services'—a subject selected by high authority as one closely affecting the lives of the families of all naval ratings whilst in the service, and of all alike once they took their discharge.

A gunner of five years' service, in civilian clothes, on his way from Tees-side to Gosport, shared the compartment with me. He had volunteered for service abroad, but had not been chosen, because he was too useful at home, he supposed. He had been offered a stripe and had refused it: he would not take on for another term when his time expired, fifteen months hence. He was a skilled man in one trade and was going to learn another—electric welding—so as to have two strings to his bow. There was no lack of jobs on good pay for skilled men—he had been offered three jobs whilst on

leave. He had not tried to bring in recruits, though they were worth 4s. and two days' leave each: he did not care to assume such a responsibility. He told any man who asked him just what the Army was—he himself had found it good enough—and let them decide for themselves. He would have been willing to sign on again next year had he not decided to marry: in fact he had gone north 'to make sure of her'—and had done so—he added, with a slow smile.

He believed in going north, where he came from, to find a mate. Girls in the south did not reach his rather exacting standard: they never baked, often they could not even cook a decent meal; they were too flighty—as he knew by experience—a Durham lass for him and for a happy married life.

We shook hands as we left the platform at Portsmouth: ten minutes later I was standing before as good an audience as any man can desire, describing the practical working—and some of the pitfalls—of National Health and Unemployment Insurance, Widows' and Orphans' and Old Age Pensions, Industrial Assurance and the Workmen's Compensation Acts. I talked for an hour and was acutely cross-questioned for as long.

Before dinner I went with the C.-in-C. on board a monitor, H.M.S. *Erebus*, on which would sleep that night in hammocks for the first time in their young lives, forty-eight midshipmen, straight from almost as many Public Schools. The C.-in-C. made careful inquiries as to their food and clothes, and the programme before them for the next few days. He took a look at them through the scullery hatch and seemed well satisfied with what he saw.

My mind went back to Horace's *Ode to Pyrrha* (I. v.), and Maurice Baring's inimitable translation:

Alas, how often will he cry  
That fair is foul and gods can lie

And stare in wild dismay :  
When the black storm-clouds blot the skies  
And blind his inexperienced eyes  
With bitter spray.

One Friday evening I was sent by the Central Conservative Office at forty-eight hours' notice to take the place of a Minister, a victim of the influenza epidemic, who had been extensively billed to speak in an industrial constituency in Yorkshire which had fallen from grace at the last election.

I had some daily papers to study on the way. The echoes of the Archbishop of Canterbury's call to religion were apparent. The Reverend Leslie Weatherhead was writing in one paper on 'These office flirtations must stop.' Canon Scott, chairman of the Elementary Education Committee at Croydon, was reported, in another paper, as opposing the idea that elementary schools should be used, in the event of air-raids, as first-aid stations. 'It was,' he said, 'entirely contrary to the spirit which has hitherto guided the education of the children in Croydon.' A correspondent in *The Times* inquired, with Juvenal, '*quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*' — 'shall the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into a pit?'—and urged more biblical instruction for teachers. Another, worldly-wise, declared that Bible teaching would be learned only if it gained as many marks as any other subject.

The conceptions of the Bishops on this matter seem to me to lack clarity. Christianity is not, as such, incompatible with the theories of Fascism or the Nazi Party, with Conservatism, Liberalism or Socialism, nor even Communism unless, as in Russia, it is deliberately linked with the propagation of atheism; Christianity is not a political creed nor is it synonymous with a vague Theism. It is possible to find many texts to support a political view: it is not possible to find in Our Lord's

teaching even the germs of a political system. What He taught we must apply as best we can to our own lives: we do not know how far or when He spoke allegorically; we can only speculate how far His teaching is reproduced in the Gospels. We have no right to dogmatise as to what line He would take to-day, though we may form our own views and act on them.

To take one aspect of controversy only—the question of competition.

Thou shalt not covet, but tradition  
Approves all forms of competition.

Thus Clough, but Sir Arthur Keith replies:

To extinguish the spirit of competition is to seek racial suicide; that spirit has lifted us from savagery and our hopes of the future are bound to it.

The civilisation of China is of a high order, but Sir T. Wade wrote:

If religion is held to mean more than mere ethics, I deny that the Chinese have a religion.

Christianity did nothing for Ethiopia, and little for the Assyrians. The downfall of Christian Constantinople was a main factor in the coming of the Renaissance and the new birth of the semi-barbarian Europe. It is not unreasonable to regard Christianity and European civilisation as independent of each other. The ethical element in great religions differs but little. Christianity, as opposed to the vague Deism which is all, or nearly all, I can find in recent Gifford Lectures, is a creed: to link it, as do many Bishops, to the League of Nations, or to Western civilisation, is historically inaccurate. Neither depends on it, and it is the principal strength of Christianity that it depends on neither.

Reading and pondering on such matters the hours passed quickly and within half an hour of my destination

I changed into a slow train and entered a compartment full of men belonging to the town in which I was to speak. 'How was trade there?' I asked.

'There's nowt wrong with it,' replied one of the older men.

'There's a lot of stock being laid up and it's all for khaki one day to my way of thinking.'

'We don't want a war, good trade or no,' said another.

'No,' said a third, 'there's only one of us here that'll have to go, and that's me. They'll ask me if I'm fit and I'll say "No, I've lost something I can't do without and that's my heart".'

'He's going to marry,' said the elder, 'that's what he means: married men get called up last, that's true, but they've got to go, heart or no heart! I left the missus and five kids behind and they had the time of their lives, they said, with no one to belt them when they did wrong.'

'Aye,' said another, 'that's what's wrong with the war generation, no father at home to put the fear of God into them. Now, my dad, he had ten; six of us boys; and if we made trouble smashing windows or playing round he'd put a bit of whipcord round our hands and tie them to a hook in a beam in the yard and then up with our shirts and down with our trousers and he'd thrash us one after another, and if we blubbered too much he'd leave us till we got cold and then give us some more. He was a rare 'un, he was, but, mind you, he was a good father. If we kept quiet he would tell his friends we was plucky lads and knew how to stand a thrashing, and pat us on the head, and we'd be proud as proud. All his daughters got married on the square before they turned twenty, which was more than some could say, and all his boys got apprenticed to a trade. He worked a ten-hour day and spent Sunday in chapel or Sunday school.'

The company listened with respect.

'You can't do that nowadays,' said the youngest, 'or you'd be in prison and the children in an orphanage. I

went to buy a cane to thrash my eldest boy with t'other day because it's about the only thing he's afeard of, and I couldn't find one. Now in my young days it was "School Canes in Great Variety," and ye'd see fathers picking out the whippy ones when the holidays had gone a few days.'

He stopped abruptly and whistled a few bars from 'The Gondoliers.' 'That's on in the Hall next week,' he said, 'amateur but good.'

'What's your instrument?' I hazarded.

'Violin,' he said: 'I always liked it.'

'Are you in an orchestra?'

'Yes,' he said, and we talked of music, and old tunes and great conductors, not omitting a local man for whom he had great respect.

One man produced two oranges, another a bag of biscuits, a third some chocolate, and shared it round. They had been on overtime, they explained, and were 'fair clemmed.'

The cinema in which the meeting took place would hold 1200: 900 were expected. There was no fog: it was a fine evening; few knew that the Minister would not be there. But, excluding the platform and the local Committee, not fifty persons were present. The Chairman, a local industrialist, and the prospective candidate made admirable speeches, which I did my best to supplement. Intelligent questions were asked, especially by the younger men present, and I was driven back to Leeds to catch the midnight train to King's Cross. 'Trade,' said the agent, 'is so good that no one bothers to think about politics: they don't want a war: they don't mind rearmament but won't become Territorials. Few local employers encourage men to join by giving them extra leave: some actively discourage it and regard men who join the Fighting Forces as lost souls. All the same, they mostly did well out of the war.'

From Leeds to King's Cross I shared the compartment with three friendly youths who had been to a Sales Conference. Their job in life was to sell goods from door to door: they earned £2 a week at worst, £5 at best. Their talk was of recruiting new men for a growing organisation, the case for and against the use of a car, overcoming 'resistance of buyers' and methods of introducing new lines. They showed me their wares, and discussed how a certain traveller, not present, had managed to sell £102 worth of goods in a week. Much of their jargon was strange to me, but I noted with admiration their courage and natural friendliness.

Two were married: they seldom saw their wives except at week-ends. The task of going from door to door pressing goods on reluctant housewives seemed repellent to me, but not to them: it was their trade and, like good surgeons or lawyers, tanners or sewage engineers, they took a pride in their proficiency and had no difficulty in claiming that they performed a public service. At a low estimate 50,000 men are so engaged. They left at Doncaster with a cheery 'Good morning' and I slept uneasily until awakened at Finsbury Park.

I had the good fortune on Monday, January 18, to meet at dinner Mr. Nash, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Mr. Duncan, the Governor-General designate of South Africa. Both are statesmen, educated in the school of experience, of business, of politics and of administration. Both have a hold upon their respective publics, and the confidence of those with whom they have worked: neither has qualified for greatness by the unearned increment of commerce, exchange, or inheritance. Both alike understand the Dominions in which they respectively carry so great a burden of responsibility.

It is to such men that we must look in the future rather than to those who, by preference or inheritance, have maintained a certain detachment from their fellows.

But they will need, more than ever, the help of a highly trained, broad-minded body of civil servants. How are the Dominions placed in this respect, as compared with ourselves and the U.S.A. respectively? President Roosevelt has not concealed his conviction that the lack of an adequate civil service has been his greatest handicap, and our statesmen are not backward in acknowledging their debt to our own civil servants.

On Tuesday I met John Newsom, Director of the Durham Council of Social Service, author of *Out of the Pit*, a book dealing with conditions in the Special Areas, and particularly in coal-mining districts, which opens with a most appropriate quotation from the 69th Psalm, 'Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me,' but is weakened by a Preface by the Archbishop of York which evades the whole problem by the observation that 'remedy is never impossible where men care enough.' That is untrue: men do care enough to have found a remedy long ago had they not felt that the cure was, for those affected, too high a price to pay, viz. the exercise of ruthless compulsion on men and women, not only in the areas affected, to go whither they were sent, to do whatever they were told, at a wage fixed without their consent. Effective remedies would be drastic: they could be applied only by a Government which did not depend on votes, which was independent of vested interests of right or left, in control of a people rendered docile by the consciousness of impending catastrophe, and subjected by the daily Press to a uniform course of instruction as to the need for and propriety of any action that Government might see fit to take. Few, at present, care to contemplate such a conjunction of circumstances.

Parliament met that afternoon with a heavy programme before it and devoted four hours to a quite futile discussion as to events in Spain, followed on Wednesday and Thursday with an exceedingly practical discussion on two Bills



dealing with the livestock industry. There was no division on the Bills on the first day, and I went to Birmingham to address the local branch of the Institute of Chemistry on the work of the Parliamentary Science Committee, of which I was then Chairman. My audience was small but select, and the discussion taught me more than I was able to tell them.

I had to return by the midnight train: a few miles out of Birmingham two boys, naval ratings from the *Royal Sovereign*, entered the compartment. They were on their way back to Portsmouth. One had been six, the other eighteen months in the service, but the senior had spent nearly half his time in hospital at Shotley with ear trouble, 'due to bathing' he explained. They liked the service, 'it was all right if you started right.' They were about to go abroad and rejoiced in the prospect. I judged from their talk that they both came from poor homes in long, narrow streets. One of them told me that he had saved up to buy a hammock, and when he was last on leave he managed to fix a couple of hooks in the kitchen walls, strong enough to carry it so that he could have a bed of his own. He did not care for much leave, 'home was not much to go back to': the other, who came from the same town, agreed, but added ingenuously that it was nice to have a bit of money, and to be able to do a bit with it at home, though 'it came expensive.'

A constituent asked me this week to see his mother, who was dying and was bent on speaking to me. I could but comply: she was very old and weak: it was plain that the end was near, but her thin voice was as clear as her mind, though her sight was dim and the attic was dark, for it was late afternoon on a cloudy day.

'I can't see you properly,' she said, 'but I know your voice, for I've heard you speak. I'm tired; I'm going soon, and I want to tell you something I've never told anyone before. You've had my vote—twice. And

now I want you to look after England. Things aren't what they should be—not lately. It isn't what the papers say that worries me—that's bad enough—but what they don't put in. I know all about things: I've lived a long time. I've seen big families grow up; there's none like that now: the big families kept their names, now it's all little families and they'll die out and I'm frightened lest England should die too.

'Then'—with a shriller voice—'my father was a sergeant: he fought in India and China; my brother was a sergeant-major: he fought in Africa; my sons went to the war and some didn't come back. I know what's what. You can't trust foreigners. We must have a strong Army and look the world in the face. I don't hold with these peace meetings: there's nothing in it. Give me your hand, and promise.' I recited my Parliamentary oath of allegiance: she relaxed her hold, satisfied.

A week later she died and was laid to rest by four strong sons and eight grandsons, every one of them, so they told me later, married and with children.

I left Harwich for Antwerp on the evening of January 28: a bitter north-easterly gale was blowing: we reached the Scheldt three hours behind time, our decks covered with ice, and icicles hanging from bridge and rigging. At luncheon at the British Embassy I had the good fortune to meet Monsieur Hymans and Burgomaster Max, two Belgians of the old school, with magnificent war records. Their vigour and vivacity were astonishing: Burgomaster Max had suffered much at the hands of Germans during the war; Monsieur Paul Hymans, G.C.M.G., was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1918 to 1920 and twice thereafter; he represented his country in England from 1917, and later at the Peace Conference. He is a writer as well as a statesman of distinction who can look back with pride upon his life's work. Now in his seventy-third year, he is as young as was Lord Fisher

when, in 1914, he became First Sea Lord, and six years younger than Lord Barham at the battle of Trafalgar. He certainly looked as if, like Goethe, he would dance on his seventy-fourth birthday.

He spoke of Belgium with pride and with confidence. A Liberal of the old school, with the long memory which, as Montalembert observed, is one of the qualities of a great people, he watched events in Europe with a certain detachment, anxious only lest Latin freedom should perish before a new form of the *furor teutonicus* which Belgium had already felt at its worst in the war years.

The omens were favourable: Belgium was never more independent in a political sense than to-day, and never, perhaps, better able to maintain her financial, economic and ideological independence. Strategically independent and commercially self-sufficing she could never be, any more than any other European country. He spoke of France, as of Germany, with sympathy and with understanding; of England, where he has many friends, with affection. He looked to our Board of Trade rather than to our Defence Ministries to repair the damage of the economic crisis and to strengthen the fabric of Western civilisation.

Burgomaster Max recounted some of his own experiences during the war, with a humour that hid any appearance of bitterness. But I had just finished reading *Invasion—1914* and was not deceived by his light-hearted references to those dark days. The Continental outlook differs from ours as much as ours differs from that of the Middle West. Belgians themselves realise every day that Germany, rather than France, is their commercial hinterland and that, whatever fears may lurk in the background, they are part of Europe, and neighbours of Germany as well as of France: they must live with both.

The recent declaration by King Leopold on behalf of his Ministers that Belgian policy would, in effect, be more independent than formerly of British and French policies,

and the declaration of Herr Hitler that Germany guaranteed the independence both of Belgium and of Holland, have strengthened the forces that make for peace and cleared the air. It was, in any case, necessary in order to restore national unity in Belgium itself, where the plebeian Flemish element is always strong and often in opposition to the middle-class and aristocratic Walloons. A religious cleavage is not, at present, a danger in domestic policy, but might easily become so. Under M. van Zeeland a truly National Government has not only come into being but has taken root.

That evening I was a guest at a banquet given by the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium. The President, wearing the D.S.O. and M.C., was as British, in all but his French accent, as the principal guests were Belgian. The Minister of Economic Affairs, M. van Isacker, spoke with sober confidence, urging the need for increased foreign trade if Belgium was to maintain the rate of recovery shown by the figures of the past year. Captain Euan Wallace, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, followed with a clear and genial exposition of the same theme, from our point of view. Our Ambassador, Sir Esmond Ovey, delivered a charming oration which was greeted with great applause by British and Belgians alike, but the surprise of the evening, to me, was Monsieur Louis Franck, Governor of the National Bank of Belgium and a former Minister of the Colonies. White haired, with a square white beard, short, erect, with bright eyes and a clear voice, the Grand Cordon across his breast, he held our eyes whilst captivating our ears. Speaking of Anglo-Belgian friendship he reminded his audience that Edward III had married a Belgian girl, Philippa, daughter of the Count of Hainault: '*grâce à ses tendres soins il a créé, Messieurs, un record—douze enfants*' ; and two of his sons, Lionel of Antwerp and John of Ghent (Gaunt), took their cognomens from Belgian cities. He added, for the guidance of any member of the Chamber

who wished to emulate Edward III, that this creditable tradition still flourished in Belgium. He might also have reminded his audience that Edward III married Philippa when he was just over and she under sixteen years of age and his first son, the Black Prince, was born when he was barely eighteen years of age. In these days such happenings are likely to end summarily in 'Juvenile Courts' and, under the law as it exists to-day, the happy couple would probably be sent to Approved Schools and the Black Prince to an orphanage. Yet Edward III seized and executed Mortimer when he was nineteen.

The orator might also have said much more in praise of Philippa, for it was thanks to her initiative that a colony of Flemish weavers settled at Norwich and coal mining developed on the Tyneside. It was her prayers that saved the citizens of Calais from Edward's vengeance; her friend Froissart tells us that she summoned the English forces to meet the Scottish invasion of 1346; it was her harangue which gave them the confidence that brought success against David Bruce at Neville's Cross; her chaplain founded Queen's College, Oxford; born in 1314, her first child was born before she was sixteen. She was incontestably one of the greatest of English Queens.

As a lovely young Queen with her first-born she inspired many representations of the Virgin and Child. The birth of the Black Prince was celebrated by a grand tourney in Cheapside, between Wood Street and Queen Street. A 'grandstand' in which the Queen and her ladies sat collapsed: the King would have hung the careless carpenters on the spot, had not the Queen then and there interceded for them on her knees, as she did later for the burghers of Calais. With her death the good fortune and the repute of Edward III were no longer maintained. But the Black Prince was worthy of her, and left an indelible mark upon our history and on the outlook of his generation. He must have learned much of his statecraft from his mother. It was

perhaps due to her influence, and her family motto, than which no worthier has ever been upon a royal crest, that cricket, which had been played in England at least as early as the twelfth century,<sup>1</sup> was condemned by the Privy Council in the days of Edward III as detrimental to the practice of archery and as one of the games—*ludos inhonestos et minus utiles et valentes*—which interfered with the regular practice of archery in villages.<sup>2</sup>

I returned to London next morning: among the many passengers returning from winter sports were several with broken limbs. I should like to know whether the casualties among the English visitors to winter resorts are disproportionate to their numbers. A German on board assured me that our notoriety in this respect was due to carelessness and lack of skill, but a young accountant returning to his native land silenced him, declaring that the insurance premium for Englishmen was no higher than for Germans. We all retained, however, our respective doubts, the German distrusting the omniscience of actuaries in such matters.

I reached London to find Herr Hitler's speech prominently reported in the evening papers, with comments which revealed, for the most part, little study and less reflection. I found the comments of the French and Belgian papers in the Club on the following Monday far more intelligent and enlightening than those of the majority of our Press and, on the whole, more hopeful.

<sup>1</sup> There is a reference to bats and balls in the accounts of Edward I.

<sup>2</sup> In the time of Edward IV (the Black Prince) it became so popular that it was forbidden by law under penalty of two years' imprisonment and a £10 fine (equivalent in these days to about £100) for each player and a £20 fine on the owner of the land on which it was played. The implements of the game were, in addition, to be burned.

## CHAPTER XXII

FEBRUARY 1937

Just and unprovoked war and the repression of barbarian inroads seem to bad men felicity and to good men sad necessity.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

‘A CHRISTIAN man,’ says John Bunyan, ‘is never long at ease.’ February 3 was a busy day, beginning, so far as public affairs are concerned, with a pageant fête in aid of the Church of England Homes for Waifs and Strays, which I was called upon to open. This was followed by a meeting with a deputation of farmers and auctioneers to discuss the details of the Livestock Industry Bill now before a Standing Committee of the House of Commons. The deputation knew their business, and I learned more than I could impart to them in the course of an afternoon in a comfortable bar-parlour. Then back to London by train just in time to dine with Sir Percy Alden, a veteran in the field of social reform, before addressing, under his chairmanship, a well-attended meeting of experts in the hall of the Royal Society of Arts upon ‘Working-Class Insurance.’ The lecture required as many minutes to deliver as it had taken me days to prepare, for it embraced insurance against old age, unemployment, sickness and invalidity, industrial and road accidents, and against the costs of burial. My critics were courteous and constructive; for the second time that day I felt I had received more than I had given. I returned to the House of Commons in time to vote on a Private Member’s motion and to enjoy, in the smoking-room, an hour’s talk with

Ministers, Whips and private members, upon topics of the day.

I found myself spending much of my time in the Library of the House of Commons preparing for the concluding stages of the Standing Committee on the Marriage Bill. This was in fact disposed of on Tuesday, March 9, thanks largely to two factors :

(1) The promoters gave way to their opponents on many points ; and

(2) The Roman Catholics were advised by their Archbishop not to obstruct the Bill, as it is wholly permissive and binding on the consciences of none. Having made their public protest, and recorded their vote, no other action seemed necessary.

Those who claim to speak for the Church of England have hitherto not opposed the Bill or have even given it provisional support. Many of the Bishops, in particular, made it clear that they will support the Bill when it goes to the Lords. Against it was only one body—the Mothers' Union. In common with many other members I received from scores of parishes extensively signed letters and postcards objecting to the Bill, but whenever I asked for an opportunity to address a meeting of objectors to explain its provisions I was met with a polite refusal. Whatever might be the facts, or the view of the Bishops, the views of the objectors were fixed, their ears shut, their eyes bandaged. They were happier thus. I did not receive half a dozen independent views or verbal protests on any of the many occasions on which I met my constituents while the Bill was under discussion.

One afternoon this week I gave an address at a large secondary school in one of London's new suburbs on 'Recognition of Courage in Civil Life,' followed by another in the evening on 'Coronations in the Past.'

My victims in the afternoon were the top forms—both boys and girls—good listeners, and quick to take points and



to cheer when I hoped they would. In the evening my hosts were the local 'Lit. and Phil.' I wished in retrospect that I had delivered the second address on the first occasion. On the way thither I met at the railway station, by appointment, a young fitter, now working on munitions, who had written to me about improving himself by attending technical courses. He had read what I said on the subject at a prize-giving and he wanted to explain to me how difficult it was for a chap like him. His hours were long—he was working overtime—he went twelve miles a day each way on his bicycle and never knocked off before six and often not before seven. He was married: his wife did not like him to be away from seven in the morning till eight or nine in the evening. As for being, like me, away two or three days at a time, it would be, to her, unthinkable. He had bought her a wireless set, which helped, but he never saw his babies except asleep. The nearest technical course was another ten miles off and started at 7.30. How could he get on? The firm was a good one but did not attempt to give extra instruction to apprentices. There was a strike of moulders: they were earning £6 a week and wanted more: if they did not return to work soon he, on £2 10s. or so, would be stood off. It was very unfair, for he was as good a man as they, and, after six months, could do their job. If the worst happened and he lost his job for a time he would go to the technical school. What should he study? I made suggestions; his handwriting was good, though he was all day on heavy work: he could use a slide-rule—the foreman had taught him that. He thought he could 'figure' enough to lay out a simple job. He left on his bicycle with a 'cheerio.'

I had half an hour to wait at the railway station: a porter began to talk between trains. He told me he knew me to be, not a Socialist, but socially minded: not against capital but not so much for it as some folk who now control it with more power than wisdom. How

was Defence? I reassured him. Would it come to conscription? I thought not. He was forty, he said, but would join up again, as he did in 1914, when he ran away from home and a job to join the Army at seventeen and was called a fool by his mates. Some of them were red as red and talked about the gutters running with blood, but it wouldn't be theirs. He would stand up to the Germans and stand no nonsense from them, but he wasn't going to say that they should not get something, given of our own free will and not under duress. Let us give with a sense of strength behind us. I cordially agreed.

As I travelled up to town I took coffee in the buffet at a table with a young bank-clerk, resident in a provincial town, who deplored his fate. The 'locals' were not interesting: the town was deadly dull. I asked the name of his M.P.; he did not know: he had only been there nine months. Who was standing for the County Councils for the elections now pending? He had no idea. Had he a vote? He had never asked. What was the state of the store-cattle market: had farmers been able to get on the land during these heavy rains? He laughed. How should he know? He never read 'the local rags.' At last I discovered the true cause of his misery. There was only one cinema and one dance-hall in the town and he couldn't afford a motor-cycle to visit others. 'What about a push-bike?' I inquired. He regarded me with puzzled eyes. Ride a push-bike six miles there and six miles back? Not him. He hoped for exchange to a live branch in a populous suburb: at present he had to walk a mile to the office from his 'digs,' for there was no bus that suited—a great hardship.

What of his work? It came easy to him: mostly mechanical: hours not long. What of evening classes? He was not interested—he had finished with all that for the present. One of these days he would have to pass

the examination of the Institute of Bankers. That done, he would sit back.

His politics? He had none. Territorials? He didn't believe in them—and so on. The contrast between him and my friend the fitter was striking.

A young Probation Officer came to see me at the weekend. He was a University graduate who had chosen this work as a vocation and ministry in preference to Holy Orders, and had no doubt that he had chosen well. But the pay was less than what a skilled bricklayer or plasterer could earn. Were he not a married man, the work would have 'got on his nerves' and he would have been tempted either to reduce it to routine or to avoid the most difficult cases—those of conciliation between married couples. Drink played a large part in domestic unhappiness—cheap wines in particular did great harm, for women fell a victim to them more easily than men. Beer did little harm; spirits were far more dangerous and should be even more heavily taxed, even if the revenue suffered in consequence. Bad cooking, and the ease with which cheap and inferior foods could be obtained, were contributory factors. Labour-saving devices in lower middle-class homes and deliberate abstention from child-bearing left many women with little to do from morning till night. Their intellectual resources were meagre: secondary education seemed to have done little for them. The Twopenny Libraries provided a novel a day; the cinema, three or four times a week, was an opiate.

The life of the working class was healthier: they had not lost their love of children, but hire-purchase touts prevailed upon many women and too many men to mortgage their income for years ahead. The ease with which a man on £3 a week could obtain credit was astonishing. He found much to admire in the unconsciously brave loyalty to life of young married couples. The early age at which most working men married had surprised

him: how much greater their confidence in the future than that of the upper stratum of society.<sup>1</sup>

On February 23 I took the chair for Victor Cazalet, M.P., who spoke on his recent visit to Spain at a house in Belgrave Square and gave a vivid picture both of what he had seen and of his view of the general political situation. It was, I suppose, a partisan view, but not the worse for that. Nothing, in general, is more misleading than an unbiassed description of political movements, which, paradoxically, are generally more apt to mislead than the pronouncements of supporters of the respective parties, provided that both are given a hearing. In March 1927 Mr. Baldwin, answering questions provoked by the publication of Mr. Churchill's *World Crisis*, observed that

a historian's bias . . . can easily be corrected by others. . . . If there be a certain amount of bias in a history it is far better reading and it can always be corrected by allowing for the personal equation.

I believe this to be substantially true, and the proceedings of the Anglo-American Historical Conference of July 1926 at which the question of historical bias was discussed, which were doubtless in Mr. Baldwin's mind, suggested that the extirpation of the disease would entail a surgical operation which might well prove fatal. History without bias is, to us, as says the Afghan proverb, like a woman without virtue or an egg without salt. We must distinguish between the bias of history and the bias in history. The latter arises from the outlook of the historian and his times. The former is an inherent tendency to overstress continuity; to suggest apparent relations which are not real; to measure the past by the yardstick of the present; to assume the existence of a norm; to

<sup>1</sup> The Registrar-General's Report for 1935 shows that more than half the bachelors who married in that year were under 27 and nearly 80 per cent. were under 30, the average age of spinsters who married bachelors being two years less than that of their husbands. The mean age of marriage has only risen by eight months since 1896.

make comparisons between disparate persons, objects and situations. 'The science of bodies politic,' says Maitland, 'knows nothing of the normal or the abnormal,' or, as Lord Bryce put it to the Historical Association at its first meeting, 'the great object of teaching history is to enable people to realise that there is no such thing as a normal world.'

The straight line is the most unnatural thing in the world: if there is no transgression when there is no law, how can there be bias when there is no norm? Truth is a jealous god, and not like politics a judicious compromise: it is hidden, as Professor Morison has observed, from 'minds whose natural aptitudes are those of the precis writer or the lawyer's clerk.' Better lose a fight than win an arbitration. Justice is not the outcome of counting the upstretched palms or clenched fists of a jury which, in great issues, cannot possibly be impartial. The historian cannot judge between right or wrong, but, like the student of politics, he may hope to distinguish between true and false coin.

On my way to address a party meeting I stopped at a station on the way to meet on the platform, by appointment, the youth with the injured knee (see p. 268). He was radiant: the doctor had done wonders: he was at work again. He had got his cheque and paid it to the Savings Bank. His knee still hurt him, he admitted. 'Are you sparing it all you can?' I asked. He confessed that he was bicycling twenty-four miles a day to get to his work and back, six days a week, and a hilly road too.

'Why not go by train?'

'It's ninepence a day—that's a lot of money.'

'Why not take a monthly workman's ticket? It'll come cheaper.' I hastened to the Ticket Office to find out the price. 'It will work out at sevenpence a day—it's worth it for a month anyway.'

'I can't draw the money for eight days, because I paid in by cheque and there's no buying of tickets on

tick.' He laughed at his impromptu joke but winced with the throbbing of his knee.

'Don't risk a complete recovery by overdoing it,' said I. 'The doctor will call you a fool and it's not fair on him—I'll advance you the money.' He accepted with reluctance and the booking-clerk made out the ticket on the spot. A week later I received a money-order for the precise sum and a neat letter of thanks.

One night this month I was, with several Judges and Members of Parliament, the guest of the University of London Law Students' Society. We were enlivened by speeches from Sir Boyd Merriman, Lord Maugham, and Mr. Macquisten, K.C., M.P.—a feast as varied as the menu, but vitiated to some extent by the atmosphere. No restaurants have yet discovered how to provide effective and noiseless ventilation for small dining-rooms. The conditions under which public speakers work on these occasions would entail an immediate prosecution if the Workshops and Factories Acts were applied—and they often have to be endured for as much as four hours. Then back to Westminster to find the House of Commons still wrangling futilely over foreign affairs.

The following night I was in my constituency addressing a village audience in the interval between a dramatic performance and comic songs. The journey there and back took four hours: I spoke for fifteen minutes: to do so I missed an important debate. The engagement was booked six weeks ahead. To refuse such opportunities of speaking to and hearing my constituents means that they cannot hear me, or I see them, even once a year, for that part of Hertfordshire which I represent comprises six towns and forty villages, each of them genuinely autonomous social units. No one wants meetings between the end of April and the beginning of October, so all political speaking must be concentrated in seven months, or say twenty-eight weeks, of which Saturdays and Sundays are *dies non*, as also, for some obscure reason, Mondays.

The following day I was again speaking in the constituency—this time in a town—to a small gathering of the faithful, though the meeting was public and had been well advertised. Here, as on the previous day, I had the satisfaction of encountering men and women with thoughtful questions to ask, yet, with much to do and much to think of, such meetings would be a waste of time but for the presence of reporters from the provincial Press, whose representatives enable a Member this way to reach a great public who never, even at election times, go to a political meeting.

I had undertaken to speak at a 'political school' at Morpeth on February 27, and went north by the night train from King's Cross. I shared a compartment with a cinema technician who had lost his employment at Shepherd's Bush and was going home to seek work in Newcastle. His bitterness and resentment were boundless, but not unreasoning. The disaster which had overtaken the industry was not due to 'causes beyond control,' to economic blizzards, or bad trade. It was due, in his view, less to bad management, of which he had seen much, than to insensate, illimitable greed of the unsavoury crew of men of alien birth and nationality, race and faith who hold the industry in fee. He gave detailed figures, which I could not check, in support of his allegation.

Of what value, he asked, were our Laws or our Law Courts if they could not check such abuses? Was this the capitalistic system at work? Was this 'the resumption of international lending' so earnestly desired by some? He had kept out of politics hitherto: it was time for him and others to take an interest in them. I did not tell him that for six months I had sat as a member of a Board of Trade Committee on the Cinema Industry and had my own definite views on the subject.

We slept soundly till 5.40, when on reaching Newcastle-

on-Tyne, beyond which the train did not go, we were ejected by the porters to shiver upon the platform or to take refuge in a dark waiting-room, while the fortunate occupants of sleeping-cars were allowed to remain in the berths on a siding till eight o'clock. One wonders why Railway Companies do not attach a buffet car to such trains instead of leaving passengers to take a hasty cup of tea and a station bun on the platform at York or elsewhere. Before demanding fresh sacrifices from Road Transport the Directors would do well to consider the comfort of the vast majority of passengers at night. They would learn much by making the journey themselves as third-class passengers.

I took tea one day this month with a young workman and his wife. I had known him for four years, and his wife since their marriage. He was earning £2 5s. a week: rent and rates came to 9s. 6d. We talked politics freely, but they did not disclose their own leanings, if any. They said, indeed, that my Socialist opponent was 'a decent fellow,' but in a manner which led me to suppose that I, too, was in that class. My host was twenty-two, his wife was twenty: they had two children and a third coming. They were both inclined to resent the current emphasis on facilities and pleasures for 'youth' which seemed to them to assume invariably that no one ever married till middle age.

'What about recreation for me, with a family to care for?' asked the wife, a comely young woman. 'If someone could take the children off my hands for a week once a year and give me a holiday it would be worth more to me than National Health Insurance. If I could have sent my eldest boy to hospital this winter it would have meant a lot to him, but they won't take children with whooping cough.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whooping cough kills more children under five than any other disease. (Registrar-General's Table 22.)



'If Government want to encourage folk to have children, and there's few that do not want them, they should do something practical. Free tickets for children under sixteen accompanied by parents, for éxample. Free doctoring for children of insured persons and free admission to a hospital or free nursing when a baby comes would do a lot more good than free milk in schools and all that. We can pay our way, and proud of it, when Fred is in work—and he is not often stood off—what hits us is two guineas a week to the hospital whenever a baby comes along—bless 'em—it's the lump sums that hit us—maternity benefit doesn't cover it anywhere near—only 40 per cent.—though it's a great help. If Fred had been insured longer he might have got an extra benefit, but just because he is younger than some and not insured for five years he can get nothing. So those that need most get least, but there—it's the same the whole world over—and Fred and I are happy—we are that—but it makes me angry to see what some folks get out of "the Club".'

Fred, between cups of tea, took up the tale from another standpoint. If he ever went sick, he would get but 15s. benefit: if he managed to get unemployed before he went sick, he would get 17s., plus 3s. for his wife and 3s. for each child, so long as he could crawl to the office to get it. To be on sick benefit was a living death. Things ought to be straightened out all round. We discussed all-in insurance—that was the sort of collective security that working men wanted and would pay for, but it must be run by the State and not for profit.

The New Moon, and the Jewish Sabbath, fell this year on Good Friday, as in Jerusalem of old—a rare conjunction.

*De sacris haec sit una sententia, ut conservetur.*

Thus Cicero, *de Legibus*. 'Let us agree that things sacred be inviolate.'

Easter Day is to many the greatest of Christian festivals. Many Bishops and Protestant theologians now holding high ecclesiastical office have taken the view, for which Herr Kerrl has been so bitterly attacked by Bishops and others in this country, that the Virgin Birth is not essential to the Christian faith. St. Paul never mentions it and it could not be deduced from any of Our Lord's recorded words. But the spiritual significance of the Resurrection has always been more easily understood.

Those who lament the passing of the age of faith, which seems to have been placed by all writers in the past, should leave their flats and mansions in the towns and go into the country where, because men and women are in closer touch with nature, they understand better than those to whom the soil, unsurfaced with cement or asphalt, is almost a defilement, the rhythm of the seasons and the reality of and need for religion. Easter is the harbinger of spring: the harvest festival celebrates fulfilment of promise. Most village churches are full on each occasion.

After an evening meeting I made my way to a public-house to meet by appointment a constituent—a retired naval rating with a pension—who wanted help and advice. He was in a good post, as things were nowadays, as a stoker in a gasworks; he had five sons: two had just reached school-leaving age: he wanted to get them into the Navy—*now*: he could not afford to keep them at school longer. They could earn good money outside as errand-boys, but that would be a pity. Far better start them off in the Navy the moment they left school. I explained that boys were not accepted till fifteen and a half for the Navy or even for the Army Training Schools: he had best keep them at school—the school they were at was a really good one—at whatever sacrifice till they could go on to the service in which they were to make their careers.

He was an intelligent and thoughtful man, and as we sat

over our beer he outlined his ideas for making the Fighting Services into a great social service. All recruits, to his mind, should enter it at fifteen or so, do their two years' preparatory schooling and then join the ranks for three years, with the right to extend for successive periods of three years, till they became entitled to a pension. Not many would wish to serve so long, but they should have the right to do so. On such lines the services would be the moral backbone as well as the shield of the country, and might be made the basis of a great national system of education and service. He was no dreamer: he loved the service, which he had himself entered as a boy to follow in his father's footsteps. He had uncles and nephews in the Army—all had done themselves credit in proportion as they had made the service a career.

The Bishop of London, who has publicly referred to the recent discovery that 50 per cent. of the children of London do not know what happened on Good Friday, need not have limited his remarks to London, nor have linked them with the need for more churches. Primary and senior secondary schools have presumably some responsibility for teaching the elements of Christianity in a Christian country. That many masters and mistresses neither believe nor teach Christianity in State schools is common knowledge. Some of the consequences are, perhaps, seen in Borstal. The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford, Cambridge and Bristol in a letter to *The Times* on April 22 on the subject of the recruitment of officials by local authorities urge that they should be drawn from the universities. The Departmental Committee which considered the question in 1934 posed this dilemma: 'Either the entire educational system of the country is mistaken, or local authorities ought to be drawing systematically on the universities.' *The Times* leader-writer, like almost everyone in that position, assumes that the dilemma is rhetorical and that nothing is seriously wrong. Those who, in daily life, handle the product of

our national system of education are less confident. The emphasis on the rights and the slurring over of the obligations of youth in public declarations of educationists may or may not be significant, but the consequences are at least as obvious in the older universities as in the elementary schools. We must blame ourselves for our vast orphanages, full of children who are orphans mainly because they have been abandoned or ill-treated by their parents. We must blame ourselves for juvenile delinquency which has little or no relation to poverty or unemployment. We must blame ourselves for the growing population of our Borstal institutions and for the growth of a great multitude of maimed survivors of road accidents, more numerous now by far than the maimed survivors of the Great War, and for the not less numerous body of maimed and halt, the debris of industrial accidents. No system of education can eliminate all these burdens on society, but they might be reduced by half.

## CHAPTER XXIII

MARCH 1937

The war is against two enemies—wealth and poverty; one of whom corrupts the soul with luxury, while the other drives him by pain into utter shamelessness. What remedy can a city of sense find against the disease? In the first place they must have as few retail traders as possible; and in the second place, they must assign the occupation to that class of men whose corruption will be the least injury to the State; and in the third place they must devise some way whereby the followers of these occupations themselves will not readily fall into habits of unbridled shamelessness and meanness.

The guardians of the law shall meet and take counsel with those who have experience of the several kinds of retail trade . . . and when they meet they shall consider what amount of receipts, after deducting expenses, will produce a moderate gain to the retail trades, and they shall fix in writing and strictly maintain what they find to be the right percentage of profit . . . and so retail trade will benefit everyone, and do the least possible injury to those in the State who practise it.

PLATO. *Laws*, xi. 919. (JOWETT, v. p. 307.)

BENEATH the surface, during March, deep currents were moving, not indeed unnoticed, but ignored in Parliament and only superficially dealt with in the Press. The apprentices at Glasgow were getting ready to strike and were enlisting widespread support, ignoring the counsel of the Trade Unions. The miners at Harworth were restive, and as little inclined to take the advice of their leaders. The staff of the London Passenger Transport Board were making demands for a fresh agreement to replace existing arrangements which were due for renewal just before the Coronation; the provincial omnibus companies were doing likewise and were impatient of the

slow-moving machinery of conciliation. I heard tales of unrest among the lower grades of railwaymen, who wanted the cuts of 1931 to be restored. I invited a friend, a Socialist by conviction, working class by origin, and utterly British in outlook, to breakfast to discuss the proposition. He agreed with me that great changes were pending: he took a more serious view than I did of the extent and depth of the movement. The rank and file knew that they could never get a majority in Parliament and that they could do no good there without one. They were tired of the theorists, the economists, the intelligentsia, the experts and the place-seekers, bred not in the factories but in the workshops, who tended to take the lead out of the hands of the simpler men like Lansbury, Henderson, Hardie and Wheatley. Labour leaders talked theory: they forgot the simple claim of their followers for social justice. They ceased to preach the class war, but it existed as a fact. They had abandoned the ideals which made well-to-do folk rally to them, in favour of theories which attracted only callow youths and put forward five-year plans which would deceive no one and harm no one. They clung to that boneless wonder the League of Nations, in the pathetic belief that fifty capitalist States could create the peace which they had always said was inconsistent in this country with capitalism. They shouted for sanctions, and against armaments, for collective security and no increase of the Air Force. They were so busy thinking of blockaded Spain that they forgot that many areas in England were blockaded—in the sense that they could not get food or raw materials to suffice their needs.

The working class knew that the political advance of Labour had been stopped in Parliament: further progress must be on other lines, as of old. Strikes were wasteful, but they gave results, and Conservative shop stewards were as determined as young Communists to get a bigger share of the wealth they produced.

The importance of the sympathetic strike should not be underestimated: it was idealistic and unselfish, and it was nearly always rewarded.

Leaders would presently emerge, not from the universities or the schools of economics but from the ranks: they would tell Parliament to stand aside and would deal with employers direct, telling them that unless they would willingly share the wealth of Britain there would be none to share.

As Pepys might have said, 'God knows how it will turn out.'

To the casual observer, however, the political barometer was 'set fair': those who, a year earlier, had declared that Mr. Neville Chamberlain would never make a good Prime Minister were saying that he was the 'only possible' successor to Mr. Baldwin. A month later, after his Budget speech, the same persons were murmuring like the ungrateful Israelites against Moses. Mr. Baldwin is the only 'popular' figure on one side: Mr. Lansbury on the other. They and, perhaps, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Mr. Maxton can draw a crowd at a public meeting. The rest, whether on the Front Bench or on the platform, somehow fail to play the demagogue, on the one hand, or the 'elder statesman' on the other. But Mr. Neville Chamberlain will, I believe, in a year's time be as great a figure as Mr. Baldwin in the first year of his Premiership.

An hour short of King's Cross a bright-eyed, well-dressed young Cockney entered the restaurant car with a girl: they sat opposite me and he ordered tea for two. As soon as it was placed before them he drew from his pocket, and divided, a packet of biscuits, but later ordered some bread and butter after a discreet inquiry as to costs. The girl, pretty and well-mannered, rebuked his extravagance: 'You must not waste your money on me—yet.' 'You've got nothing to say—yet,' he retorted.

'If you want a say you know what to say,' he continued darkly.

They accepted cigarettes, and told me they were going to the West Ham Speedway. They had been there a month ago: it was worth the cost of a journey to London. The girl declared 'she got a kick out of it.' The boy glanced at the paper with its anticipations of the Budget. 'A penny on juice?—we'll have to go without our car,' he said laughingly to the girl. 'Make it a tandem bicycle,' she replied, 'I'm no weight.' 'You kicked at the idea last spring,' he replied. 'Perhaps I'm feeling different now,' she said. I paid my bill and left her to define the difference. They were constituents of mine, but were unaware of the fact.

After attending a very Conservative dinner I left London late one evening on my way north to speak at a by-election. For the first hour my companions were, once more, an express engine-driver and his mate. We began, as usual, to talk 'shop'—viz. his own life-history, which was merged in the fortunes of the Great Central Railway, for whose corporate existence he retained a sentimental and indeed affectionate regard. He left school at eleven: got to know something of the world as an errand-boy, which led to his enlistment as a van-boy, as he already knew every street in a big district. He got to know the right people who got him a job as a carriage cleaner, and later as an engine cleaner and greaser. Then he became a fireman on a shunting engine, then on slow local and finally on express trains; drivers chose their own firemen, as was right, and he served a fine lot of men till, one day, he was able to drive an engine himself. Long before that happened he had married and now owned his own home at Rugby, but could not live in it as he had been shifted to Neasden. His eldest and youngest were girls, the middle four were boys. All had done well: he had brought them up in clogs and the school



doctor had complimented him on the result. He had never spared the strap when they were young, or the cane when they grew older, and needed it. He held it to be 'good medicine,' and his Dad had done him good that way. Only the youngest was at home now. Three were married and lived nearby, so his wife was happy. In five years he would get his pension and would be ready for it. Stout in body and in heart, I saw beauty in his rugged oil-stained face as he smoked his pipe ; nor was his mate, the fireman, of coarser clay.

We turned to talk of 'banks' and 'barracks'—mostly bad—of badly placed block signals and the strain of fogs : of level crossings which should be abolished, and of electrification. As we rounded a curve the wheels of our carriage jarred sharply at the points. He made a wry face. 'It's like toothache to me,' said he, 'to feel that. I'd be happier on the footplate with my hand on the brake.' When they left the compartment with a pleasant farewell their place was taken by a young electrician returning to his firm in Manchester from finishing a contract job in the South. His talk, though not less interesting, contrasted strongly with that of the driver and seemed to me to be typical of the next generation. Business was good : there was no shortage of work for men who knew their job. He had been in Aylesbury last month : three hundred girls had been transferred from some distressed areas in Yorkshire. You could hear their accent in the streets and it was good to listen to. But he did not like to think of the ultimate consequences of all this uprooting, though he supposed it had all happened before, when Lancashire was growing fast. He had gone to a dozen houses before he could get a bed, and then he had to share a small room with three others. He lived in Wythenshawe, which he praised heartily ; though for himself he preferred the long streets of small neat private houses of an older generation of town-planners. So did most people—you never saw one unsold

for long. He had worked in London and did not like it: he had lived for some time in a flat. It was dreadful to his mind to have strangers above and below and all round you: noisy, with their loudspeakers and the rest; smelly—someone cooking kippers or tripe all day—and ‘no class.’ A vertical, instead of a horizontal slum. But nothing was as bad as what he had seen in Glasgow. Scotsmen boasted a lot, but they had made a bad mess of Local Government. Southerners were less conscientious workers than Northerners and needed more supervision. They did less for their money than he was accustomed—and proud—to do. The next slump would be terrible: could nothing be done in advance to mitigate its severity? Deferring public works was a good move, but plans should be ready. He knew by experience that it took two years at least from the time a scheme was approved in principle to the time that work was started. It often took much more.

He was thirty—six years married—two children—Wythenshawe was a good place for children, and there were good schools—he had never been without a job, but he was satisfied with ‘a pigeon pair.’ It was Budget Day—yet neither he nor the engine-driver mentioned the Budget or Spain: but upon football, and the merits of the individual players, and upon football pools, the electrician had much to say.

A young soldier, a private in a line regiment, whom I had known since he was a child, called on me again (see p. 139), the picture of physical and moral health; Army life had worked wonders. He was of good family, and hoped soon to get a commission; he enjoyed his work, he enjoyed the company of his comrades: he himself had ‘no complaints.’ I asked him whether the abolition of certain stoppages from pay, the improved food, and other minor concessions announced by the Secretary of State, would stimulate recruiting. He was quite sure

that they would have no effect whatever. So far as he could make out, the abolition of stoppages 'for articles of equipment which men are compelled to have under Regulations' was not worth 1s. a month; it might not be worth so much. 'The damage,' he continued, 'has been done. The Army has got a bad reputation so far as pay and prospects go, and it will need something more to bring men in. The Navy and Air Force are better paid, and mostly serve at home. They are,' he continued, 'not dumped down, as most Army units, in places miles from a town: their quarters are on the whole better, their prospects of employment much better, as their job fits them for civil life. Naval ratings can all serve for pension, if they want to: we cannot, and we would not if we could.'

'What about the promise of employment?' I inquired.

'It cuts no ice,' he replied. 'The sort of job that is offered is the lowest paid job in the Post Office, and so on. Those that have not served in the Army will see to it that they keep the best for themselves.'

'Anyway,' he added, 'look what has just happened in Hertfordshire—the County Council have raised the pay of every road-mender in their employment by 5s. a week! The Army cannot compete against that sort of thing. I've no idea why it has been done, but it does not encourage men to work on the land, or in the Army: better work on the roads when work is available and go on the dole when it stops.'

'What is your remedy?' I asked.

'Three-year enlistments,' he said confidently, 'with the right to continue at six months' notice for home service or three years for foreign service. You would get the men all right then, and many would take on for another three years. India is popular with those that have been there, but those who have never been abroad don't like leaving their families for so long.' The Guards serve for four years, and they always get recruits.

A few days later I received a letter from a man who had himself obtained a commission from the ranks, and believed that the present shortage of officers could in part be met from this source. Only some twenty-five men get their commission thus every year. He believed that four times as many could be obtained with advantage. The Secretary of State for War had said (on December 9 last) that the position had been found satisfactory when last examined by a Committee in 1931, but much had happened since then.

Playwrights and novelists must be held in part responsible. There were ranker officers in the armies of Europe : they were never made mock of by writers. He had never heard any ranker complain of his treatment by his fellow-officers, but they had, notoriously, been scurvily treated by the Treasury. On the general topic of recruitment he was convinced that the administration of the Pensions Acts, interpreted with a rigidity never contemplated by Parliament, had done more harm to Army recruiting than anything else. All the Fighting Forces were in this respect treated alike, but there were a hundred hard cases who had served in the Army for one in the other services. What a tale Haig House could unfold, if it so desired, of conflicting opinions ending with a decision in favour of the Treasury ! He had served his full time with the Army, and his views seem to me to deserve consideration.

During the month I addressed the fifth and sixth forms of a mixed secondary school in one of London's newest and least aristocratic suburbs upon ' Optimists and Pessimists in History.' I concluded by offering three prizes for essays upon the same subject. To read those submitted was a revelation of what was really behind the politely impassive faces of my audience. Not one had any use for pessimists or for determinism in any form. One girl supported her view by appeals to Aristophanes

and Tennyson, Euripides and Virgil, Chaucer, More, Johnson, Carlyle, Macaulay and Disraeli. A boy called Job the first optimist, and Buddha the first pessimist, in history. Muhammad was an optimist. So, passing quickly through time, 'were Bunyan, Burns and the Brontës'; explorers and pioneers, he added, were by nature optimists, and the world owed much to them. Another contrasted Tom Paine and Wordsworth's views on revolution, much to the former's advantage.

Job was written down as a pessimist by a third, together with most of the 'extreme Christians.' He cited Omar Khayyám's 'jug of wine . . . and thou . . . ' as 'a tempting but inadequate philosophy,' and condemned the attitude of despair underlying Ecclesiastes and Thomas à Kempis, comparing their views with Milton and 'that prince of optimists, Saint Paul.'

It is no exaggeration to say that every single essay was worth reading: each one showed originality; and underlying them all was a spirit of confidence and faith in the future: in the words of one essayist aged sixteen: 'history is the record of successful optimism . . . indomitable faith . . . in the ultimate greatness of man. *Hoc signo vinces.*'

I should have liked to have given prizes to them all.

An often-voiced grievance is the failure of urban authorities to provide sheltered parking-places for cycles such as are to be seen abroad. Sir Kingsley Wood has suggested 'walk to work' as a slogan for 1937—that is, for many, impossible; but hundreds of thousands of women and millions of men use their cycles to go to and from work, often travelling thus fifteen miles each way—in all weathers, six days a week—an immense saving in transport costs and a great gain to health. But for the bicycle, the problems of urban transport and housing would be quite unmanageable, for cross-country facilities in the early hours of the morning and late at night do not

exist, and there are many journeys which cannot be undertaken, otherwise than by bicycle, except at prohibitive expenditure of time and money. Many unmarried men and women who work in London and live, perforce, in a suburb pay more for transport than for rent. The motor-ing organisations, on occasion backed by the very unjudicial and gratuitous *obiter dicta* of coroners, seek to regard cyclists as intruders on the roads. They are, in fact, numerically the vast majority of road-users, and one and all are wage-earners either going to and from their work or seeking the only form of healthy recreative exercise open to them. The Ministry of Transport's recent analysis of road accidents, in allocating responsibility for accidents, seems to apply the same standards of conduct to pedestrians of all ages, cyclists and motorists. This procedure, so far as the allegation can be justified, lacks objectivity. A tired man, finishing a twelve-mile ride homewards in the dark on a wet night against a high wind or in fog, dazzled by the fierce lights of motors passing at high speed, deserves sympathy and admiration. Should an accident occur, the primary responsibility is on the driver of that lethal weapon the motor, unless it can be shown that he was not travelling faster than was safe in all the circumstances. Most men who cycle to work are compelled to do so by the difficulty of finding houses near their work and by the high and still rising cost of transport.

## CHAPTER XXIV

APRIL 1937

Who ever desired to have faire gardens and fruitfull fieldes, had more reason to consult the dull plowman and unread gardener than the philosopher or acute disputant.

JOHN LOCKE. *De Arte Medica*.

ON March 30 I went north to speak at Blackburn on the way to spend a few days' walking in the Lake District. A corporal of the Coldstream Guards, in uniform, an engine-driver returning home with his mate after taking an excursion train to Carlisle, and an electrician who had done contract work for railway companies all over England, were my companions from Euston to Crewe. The driver was the eldest: he talked freely of locomotives old and new, and of 'roads' good and bad, marked in his memory by accidents, avoidable and otherwise.

The electrician had travelled far and wide: when unable to get a decent bed in a town he had even lodged in casual wards; they compared favourably with some places where skilled men were expected to rest and sleep. He spoke of conditions in railway-managed hotels: the pages and waiters were paid as elsewhere derisory wages and expected to live on tips. He had helped to modernise some of these hotels. The good work too often stopped short at the quarters the staff lived in, which were often ill-ventilated and dirty. Public health authorities did not worry the big people: they would not bite the hand that fed them. He told us what dining-car attendants got in wages and how the tips were divided between cooks and waiters. The car attendants were ill-paid and

depended on tips. I expressed admiration for their unfailing courtesy to the public from dawn to dusk: he retorted that he admired the public for being so patient with railway directors who could do everything except pay decent wages and dividends. Rationalisation, the application of reason to business, had only just begun. He turned his attention from me to the corporal, who had been sitting erect and impassive in his corner, his tunic open, displaying a neat pull-over beneath.

‘What are you thinking of, young sweat?’ he asked.

‘It’s no good telling you,’ replied the corporal; ‘you haven’t met her.’

‘What do you think about what we’ve been saying?’ persisted the electrician.

‘I reckon you’d always be grouching about something: you talk like [he mentioned a weekly journal]—a scandal or tragedy, week in week out, and nothing right. Folk have got to look after themselves and find their way up and out. The world’s hard, but it’s not as bad as you make out.’

The engine-driver nodded assent, but the electrician was offended.

‘You boys in red are paid to be ready to shoot us down if we try to make trouble. You’re just agents of the capitalists; you ought to stand by your own class.’

‘That’s all bunk,’ replied the corporal calmly; ‘keeping people from making fools of themselves is the job of the police.’

‘And the police are just guardsmen in blue, and the Army would always be behind them if there was trouble in the streets. You are all paid to protect property, and to hell with the workers.’

‘What are the workers going to get by smashing property, I’d like to know?’ said the corporal.

‘We’d burn a few houses and smash a few offices to put the wind up the nobs.’

‘It’s not so easy as all that,’ said the engine-driver:



'fires don't stop just where you want, and like as not you'd find the property belonged to a trade union or a friendly society or the "Co-ops." They've got a tidy bit of money tied up that way.'

'Anyway,' concluded the corporal, 'your sort make me tired. You talk well enough, but you'd never make a woman happy, let alone raise a family. You'd get on anyone's nerves telling what would happen to them when you're dead.'

'I'm not married, thank God,' said the electrician; 'I wouldn't bring children into this sort of world.'

'I've brought up six and I'm proud of 'em,' observed the engine-driver. 'And I've three nippers,' said the fireman. 'Life's bloody at times, but it might be a lot worse, and it's a bit better than it was, war or no war.'

After playing my part at Blackburn, I retraced my way to Wirral to retrieve my son from school, and then took a train to Windermere, whence we walked to Dungeon Ghyll, in Upper Langdale, arriving after dark. The evening was clear, and we wished that *The Times* star map, due two days later, was in our hands. The Lake District is still a paradise for walkers, so long as they avoid highways, which have in the past twenty years been ruined for pedestrians, whose interests are here, even more than elsewhere, sacrificed to those of motorists by highway committees and their masters—county and district surveyors. Grass verges have almost completely disappeared: footpaths have been thrown into the roadway and, where they exist, are more like a torrent-bed than a place of safety for the young and old. As visiting motorists multiply, so have prices for pedestrians risen, though they are still more moderate than in the South of England. But the hills and the stony rocks are still a safe refuge, as they were when the 104th Psalm was written, for young people with more muscles than money, and an enduring joy for all.

We dined in comfort, and were up betimes next day, hoping to reach Wasdale Head by way of Rossett Gill and Esk Hause. Before we reached the top, in heavy deep snow, now no longer bearing, we were overtaken by a dozen walkers, including four girls, and went in their company as far as Angle Tarn. The young men's packs were heavy, but they were in a splendid condition; one taught in an elementary, another in a secondary school: the rest of the party, which was in three groups, included shop assistants, machinists, clerks and a hotel cook from Liverpool with his young woman. None were strangers to the Lakes, all hoped to find accommodation in one of the establishments of the Y.H.A. (Youth Hostels Association), to which they all belonged. Some had reserved their beds; others, doubtful of the weather, trusted to luck. Scorning the heavy snow, they were determined to climb Scafell Pike before descending to Wasdale. They were a gay party, but the snow ahead was too heavy for my weight, and we regretfully left them to turn down the snow-clad slopes to Long Strath and thus, via Rosthwaite, to Seatoller House, passing the fine hostel, newly erected by the Co-operative Holidays Association, to take tea with the owner, an old friend and a lineal descendant of the famous Mrs. Pepper, whose acquaintance I first made with my father and mother over forty years ago.

The visitors' books claimed my eager attention. The older ones were as good as old wine of a vintage year and they included some great names, and praise of Mrs. Pepper and the Lakes in many languages, by members of reading parties from the great Universities. There were no buses in those days, and no asphalted roads: the picture postcard had scarcely begun its sway. The railway service to Keswick was just as good but, for the rest, visitors had to rely upon horsed chars-à-bancs or their own legs, and only the very old or the very young were allowed to ride behind the horses up to the last half of the Kirkstone Pass.

Men still read, and quoted, Wordsworth : Canon Rawnsley was alive, and active, and beloved. One could 'sail on the Lakes, or go in a steamboat, but motor boats were unknown : there were photos showing gentlemen of position, standing by their cycles, in deerstalkers' caps, stockings and knickerbockers.

We took our tea in the old room—which seemed to have grown much smaller—and went our way.

Above us rose the Honister Pass, which the County Council seem determined to convert into a motor road for the great omnibuses. They have already made it fit for light cars and have, to that extent, spoiled it for pedestrians. As a lad from Warrington put it to me indignantly, 'The idea nowadays is to enable anyone to get anywhere sitting on a cushion ; and yet they talk about keeping fit !' He and a friend had, not for the first time, wheeled their bicycles over Esk Hause from Wasdale, climbing Scafell as an interlude. My Y.H.A. badge attracted their notice and they inquired anxiously as to accommodation : a bed in the hostel each night meant, for them, the difference between a week's and a fortnight's holiday—it all depended upon how long the money would last. He and his lively pal were machinists who had been 'stood off' for a fortnight while 'the shop' was being reorganised.

We walked down Borrowdale to the hostel at Grange to look for a bed. The hostel was full, but we found room in an old cottage, where, for 5s. 6d. each, we got dinner, bed and breakfast—all three of the best. As we sat on the old bridge, admiring a fine local example of a glacier-worn rock, another group of walkers arrived, hoping for accommodation in the hostel : hearing that there was no hope for them, they sat down to take counsel. They could get dinner there for 1s. a head—that was something saved. It was too cold to camp out, and they had no kit, but a landlady might let them share two beds between them at 2s. a head and 6d. each for

sandwiches next morning. One of them, selected for tact, was sent ahead to try to strike a bargain. He returned to report that the old lady would only allow two in a bed, at 2s. a head. What was to be done? They decided to resort to stratagem: after two had retired to rest one of them would come down the narrow stairs in his boots: he would meet the third at the door, who would have removed his boots and would escort him upstairs, trusting to his heavy footfall to drown the sound of the other's footsteps. In the morning they would devise a scheme to smuggle the odd man out of the house unnoticed. It was a great scheme, and I learned next morning that it had succeeded.

We shared our lodging—and our dinner—with an East End Jew, a furrier by trade—a well-built, sturdy man of thirty who seemed to have visited the most walkable parts of England. He was a married man with a family: these jaunts—four or five every year—meant everything to him; he could, he said, scarcely face life in London without them. He had a Y.H.A. ticket, but seldom used it, preferring the privacy and quietude of lodgings.

His grandparents came to London from Poland in the seventies and he was a sturdy upholder of Aliens Acts: his father had fought in the war—to be accurate he had been willingly conscripted in 1917, but had had a fairly easy time in France and he, too, would serve again 'if sent for.' His best friends were Christians; he had, of course, married a Jewess, but the Jews were too clannish to suit him. That was why he liked walking and meeting all sorts. We talked geography and politics till bedtime. Though I rose early, he was already up and away on the hills, the only solitary walker I met.

We walked to Keswick next day, through many thousands of acres of mostly derelict woodland, much of it owned by the National Trust, and took the omnibus along Thirlmere to Dunmail Raise, dropping, at Thirlspot, a party of walkers bent on climbing Helvellyn on their

way to Patterdale. They were from Sheffield, and I have seldom seen a fitter lot of young men. It is the fashion to admire the fitness of young Germans and Austrians, Danes and Scandinavians, and to deplore the lack of manly virtues in our own youth.

The tendency is not new. In 1757 there appeared, from the pen of the Reverend John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and the Times*, that went rapidly through nine editions. 'The spirit of Liberty,' he wrote, 'has grown weak in deeds and gained strength only in words.' 'It is being attacked not by tyrants from without but by destruction within the realm of those internal forces from which alone an effectual opposition can arise.'

He praised 'the Lenity of our Laws in capital Cases: our Compassion for convicted Criminals; even the general Humanity of our Highwaymen; and our generous public Charities and the pure administration of Justice,' though he noted that the 'Spirit of Commerce, now predominant, begets a kind of regulated Selfishness which tends at once to the Increase and Preservation of Property.'

On the other side of the account he condemned strongly the vain, luxurious and selfish effeminacy of the governing class, which could be traced from 'the unwholesome warmth of the nursery and the mistaken tenderness and care' lavished on youth. Only the sons of villagers and peasants led wholesome lives, while youth of quality, wrapt up from the wholesome keenness of the air, became incapable of enduring the natural rigours of his own climate. Modern education was defective alike in public schools and universities, which were growing daily thinner of young men of fortune, and those often not under proper discipline.

The effeminate and unmanly life of the majority had notoriously produced an increase of low spirits and nervous disorders, disqualifying men from enduring toil or facing danger. The Rebellion of 1745 had thrown the nation into a general panic, in which a mob of ragged Highlanders

were allowed to march unmolested to the heart of a populous kingdom. Many men preferred to pay others to serve rather than themselves to fight.

Yet within three years Wolfe had wrested Quebec from Montcalm and Clive had begun the conquest of India. We were, though those alive could not see it, on the threshold of a new and great era in the world's history.

From Dunmail we walked down the pass, halting at a public-house for beer, bread and cheese. The beer was as good as one can hope for nowadays ; the cheese of poor quality ; the bread, white as chalk and as crumbly, was, as is now usual in most parts of England, ' baker's bread,' and unappetising if not actually unwholesome. Home-baked bread, especially if made of stone-ground wheat, can be eaten dry : if chewed, it does not become a lump of paste. The 'keep fit' enthusiasts would do well to consider whether there is any possible substitute for good wholemeal bread : no nation in Europe has worse bread in common use than the average working-class family is expected to eat. No wonder consumption is falling !

We ended our brief tour by walking from Ambleside to Coniston, which, though it belongs geographically to Cumberland and Westmorland, is a part of Lancashire. The weather was ideal, the roads perfect—for cars ; but no footpath alongside anywhere. At Kirkby's Camping Ground, which commands as good a view as any similar site I know, we fell in with three other walkers who had just descended from the heights, after a very long day, and strode in with them to Coniston. There was room in the Youth Hostel a mile above the town at the old copper mines, and we all spent the night there. The food was good, the cooking excellent, the manageress a gem. The bedding was simple and as clean as in any hotel : everything else elementary but sufficient. In

the common-room was a piano, and merry-making came easy.

The conventional discipline of these hostels is entirely self-imposed: there are no rules hung up; nothing seems to be forbidden except smoking in the dormitories. Some of us helped to lay the table, others to wash up, others, again, to make sandwiches for the morrow. Most of us were early in bed; some were astir before dawn, hoping to climb the Old Man and Scafell before catching the last train to Wigan on Saturday night, but two stayed to talk. They were cousins, and hailed from Wigan: one a clerk, the other an apprentice in a machine shop in his fourth year, and nearing the time when he would be a fully qualified and highly skilled man able to make precision tools. I had a map of Roman Britain with me and some notes on Roman remains in the Lake District, which thrilled them: it was a new thing to study and follow up as one walked. The talk turned to holidays with pay, a subject they discussed intelligently and dispassionately, arguing, against me, that every fresh complication of the pay-roll was a fresh chance of misunderstanding and that it might lead to lower wages. Better stick to hour- or piece-rates and leave it to men to have the sense to save. Any rules made would be taken advantage of by bad workmen and bad employers: it sounded all right in theory but might not work in practice.

It would be better, they said, to induce employers to spread work better, and therefore holidays: another Bank Holiday, in late September, would do no harm. How much better it would have been had Easter fallen three weeks later! It may fall, as in 1818, on March 22, or, as it will fall in 1943, on April 25.<sup>1</sup> The first three months of the year are, from the point of view of public health, the most trying, and the Easter holidays are correspondingly important. An early Easter

<sup>1</sup> It will fall in 1938 on April 17, in 1939 on April 9, in 1940 on March 24, in 1941 on April 13, and in 1942 on April 5.

is a tax on health. They were keen on cycling as well as walking: they were old members of the Y.H.A., which, with a membership of 60,000, has only 7500 beds in their 270 hostels in England and Wales and could accommodate three times as many young walkers and cyclists if they had room.

I know of nothing which better deserves support from public and private funds than this Association. It owes much to the generosity of the Carnegie Trust, which contributed over £8000 to help the Association in its early days. It has had £1000 from the Jubilee Trust, and £1000 or so from the Commissioners for Special Areas. It could usefully spend £50,000, at once, in acquiring and equipping new hostels, which, once established, are self-supporting. The annual membership fee (1s. under fourteen, 2s. 6d. under twenty-five, 5s. over twenty-five) covers most overhead charges: the charge of 1s. for a bed and 1s. for a meal suffices to cover normal running charges. I can imagine no greater vicarious satisfaction for a retired business man with a place in the country than to establish and equip a hostel in the right place and to enjoy the sight and, on occasions, the company of those who use it.

Germany has 2000 such hostels; little Sweden 250; England and Wales only 270; and a forty-bed hostel costs but £1500. This is preventive medicine at its best. The Association is not only non-political: it is international, for membership of the National Association carries with it reciprocal rights in every country in Europe, as well, of course, as in Scotland and Northern Ireland and in the Irish Free State. Some 12,000 English youths used hostels in Germany last year, and arrangements were made to enable some thousands of German youths to take a walking holiday in England. Under the provisions of the new Physical Recreation Act it will be possible rapidly to develop this movement.

Thus ended our Easter holiday. Leaving Coniston



at 6.30 A.M. we were home in time for late tea on Saturday and were in our pew as usual on Sunday, all but four of the intervening hours being spent in dealing with a week's arrears of correspondence. I felt like Juvenal when he wrote :

*Crescit multa damnosa papyro ;  
quis tamen inde seges,  
terrae quis fructus apertae ?*

The damnéd pile of paper mounts,  
and makes me wonder if it counts  
for anything at all ?

The usual routine of prize-givings, political and other speeches, some with and some without a preliminary public dinner, combined with long hours in Parliament, filled the rest of the month. Each engagement of this kind, and there were many, brought me in touch with different professions and different strata : from each I gained some fresh ideas, and fresh encouragement and confidence—which increased as I penetrated downwards. What a vast amount of public spirit is in reserve, and how little of it is being used to-day. If only we could mobilise it, what a good world we could make !

On the night of April 21 I left the House before eleven to speak at the Stalybridge by-election. I slept at Nottingham and drove out eight miles next morning to Lowdham Grange, one of the newest Borstal institutions—one of those which receive the pick of Borstal boys and is built, staffed and managed to meet their needs.

In the account which follows I have drawn freely on an account of the school which appeared in *The Howard Journal* for 1933.

The buildings, erected by the boys under expert guidance, stand on high ground, amidst trees and green fields, with wide views. There is no surrounding wall ;

there are no window bars ; no boy is locked in. The restraints are internal. When the lads are picked they are told that they will help to create not only a new Borstal building, but a new spirit and traditions which will live after them. They have a choice. If they choose to come to Lowdham Grange, they know that they must make this promise :

Because of the Trust put in ME, I promise, on my honour, to do my best to keep up the good name of Lowdham Grange.

From the start, the aim is to build upon the sense of honour and loyalty inherent in every British boy.

Contact with those living outside the institution is maintained in many ways, notably through Toc H, Rover Scouts, attendance at local churches on Sunday, visits from local football and cricket teams, and occasional visits to Nottingham.

A Rover Scout Crew has been formed, and Rover Scouts from a Nottingham crew frequently visit and co-operate with the Lowdham Grange crew.

Members of the Church of England, Roman Catholics and Methodists all worship as ordinary members of the congregation in their own local churches ; the morning service is compulsory, that in the evening voluntary.

Most Saturday afternoons throughout the year see one or two visiting football or cricket teams engaged in a game with the first or second boys' team. A return game on the local club's ground is occasionally arranged. Once or twice a month a dozen boys, in civilian clothes, visit Nottingham on a Saturday evening. They spend three hours in the city without supervision, and report at a given hour and return together. A committee of the boys assists in choosing those to whom this privilege is allowed.

A system of payment in ordinary coinage for work has been successful in breaking down that which is artificial on this side of institutional life, and in raising the standard of work. All boys start in one of the five labouring

gangs ; such boys as are not considered capable of learning the elements of a trade remain in a labouring gang for the duration of their stay. A boy starts in the bottom gang and works his way up to the higher gangs. The three top gangs are paid according to the work they do ; their work is measured and its value assessed at the end of each week and the gang shares the money earned. The rates of pay in the labouring parties usually vary between 4*d.* and 1*s.* 2*d.* for a boy for a week.

In the trade parties, which include bricklaying, carpentering, plumbing, electric light fitting, hot-water fitting, smithing, painting, cooking, baking, farming and gardening, the boy starts as a labourer. After a month's successful trial he becomes a novice, thence rising to apprentice junior, apprentice senior, and finally to improver. Each stage usually represents three or four months' work, and his promotion is only attained after thoroughly satisfactory reports of his skill by his instructor, his foreman and the clerk of works. An increase of 2*d.* a week goes with each promotion, culminating in a maximum of 1*s.* 2*d.* for an improver. The standard of the improver grade is kept high and is difficult of attainment.

Being in some sense a wage-earner, a boy must pay for anything beyond the bare necessities of life. Besides paying for cigarettes or jam he must pay a small subscription if he wishes to join the cricket or football club or the indoors games club of his House, he must pay an entrance fee for the occasional concert or cinema show in the winter, and he must save 2*s.* 6*d.* if he wishes to take part in the week-end summer camp.

There is one work party yet to mention—the 'unemployed' party ; not here entered by a lad through no fault of his own, but only when, through laziness or misconduct, he has shown himself worthy of dismissal from his normal job. He remains in it until he has proved himself fit to be re-employed by working hard under close supervision at a dull job ; while unemployed, he still

gets bed and food and clothes, but no pay nor privileges of any sort. At times, for several months together, no boy is 'unemployed.'

When his eight-hour working day is over, the boy, after a thorough wash and tea, divides his evening between recreation and evening classes. The latter, extending to one and a half hours in winter and one hour in summer, include technical classes, handicraft classes, outdoor hobbies, ordinary school subjects and occasional lectures by experts on various aspects of the national life. The time spent on ordinary school subjects refreshes the boy's memory and brings back to his mind what he has forgotten during the two to seven years that have elapsed since he left school. Special care is taken to bring the backward boy up to the standard required by the position he should occupy in life. Technical classes in bricklaying, carpentry, farming, etc., supplement the day's practical work with some theoretical training. Handicraft classes aim at providing the boy with a cheap and useful hobby, such as rug-making, stool-making, fretwork or wireless, for his leisure time. Outdoor hobbies include the care of rabbits, pigeons and ducks and the tending of allotment gardens.

The annual production of a musical play shows, by the high standard attained, that latent talent is to be found and can be given a useful outlet through the patient efforts of skilled conductors. The gym. team, which does itself credit at public entertainments, shows that physical training is not neglected.

The day ends with House prayers, for which careful preparation is made. To help each boy in the development of the spiritual side of himself is considered to be of vital importance.

There are three Houses, subdivided into Groups of about twelve boys. A 'Leader,' a boy chosen by the Housemaster for his qualities of moral courage and powers of leadership, is in charge of each Group. All boys sleep

in dormitories, each holding twelve boys, in one of which also sleeps a member of the staff. The boys have their meals in House dining-rooms; unmarried members of the staff share the same food and eat at the same tables as the boys. Having a House of reasonable size, about sixty boys, the Housemasters, House Matron and House staff are able to gain that knowledge of and exercise that influence over each individual, which is the first essential in the work of re-shaping character. As the picked Borstal boys are sent here and as the conditions of life here facilitate training of character, a long period of training is usually unnecessary; the average stay is fifteen months.

The aim of the staff is to 'guide back those who have started upon lines leading to disaster to lasting ways of right living, to the right standards of the world at least, to the standard of Christ if possible.' 'Aim High' and 'Stickability' (a word coined here) are their slogans; that the ideas behind them are powerful supports in times of difficulty or success, countless letters from old boys prove. Such tokens are the reward of our work and the spur to aim even higher to fulfil the possibilities of one of the finest tasks God gives to man.

I asked whether the staff had any assistance from or correspondence with clergy who knew a particular boy and was willing to help him when he went out into the world again. 'Very seldom,' was the reply: 'very few of these boys seem to know or be known by the clergy, though the R.C.'s are to some extent an exception. The Churches seem to have no knowledge of what happens to their parishioners in Court.'

The Archbishops' 'Recall to Religion' made at the turn of the year was echoed in many pulpits and in innumerable leading articles and letters from correspondents to the editors of daily and weekly papers, but there is no evidence that it was heeded by those for whom

it was intended. To some 'religion' means a purely personal and transcendent experience: to others it imports the production of religious sensations and mystical fervours. Some emphasise the first of the two Great Commandments to the virtual exclusion of the second. The clergy as a whole rightly regard regular attendance at corporate worship as a necessary element in the practice of religion.

Their efforts are not assisted by the activities of the B.B.C., whose services, based upon a liturgy which mixes traditional with modern phraseology deprived, in the process of abbreviation, of significant forms, are little more than a parody of what a religious service should be. The music is conventional and professional, the prayers are based upon no steady principle: the sermons too often resemble an opiate, coated with sugar.

They are seldom expository: they do not and are not intended to provoke heart-searching thought. The preacher is remote: he cannot converse with his parishioners at the lych-gate. Of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion, of Thanksgiving after childbirth, there is no mention. The Litany, of liturgies of prayer the greatest, is unheard. 'Not such defenders, nor such aid the times require.'

The plain fact is that few English Protestants are prepared to believe many of the doctrines of Christianity. That has probably always been so, but an increasing number are not prepared even to assent thereto by taking part in religious services based upon assumptions and theories that they feel bound to reject. The traditional service of the Book of Common Prayer, unabridged, accompanied by hymns, especially the oldest of them, derived from Latin originals and familiar to the congregation, and the Psalms, followed by an expository and hortatory sermon, still holds its own in many places. The 'High Church' forms of service may or may not be acceptable to the sophisticated and 'comfortable' classes: they

co-operation of public departments in a great enterprise was matched by the self-imposed discipline of the public.

The proceedings in the Abbey itself were equally faultless; the traffic control was perfect; the great stream of vehicles flowed smoothly along the appointed channels to the prescribed entrances where the Gold-Sticks ushered guests to their appointed places. Each phase of the programme was punctual to the moment; the successive processions of members of the Royal Family, of Royal and other representatives of sixty-two foreign States,<sup>1</sup> headed by the Prince and Princess Chichibu of Japan, of the Dean and Prebendaries of Westminster, of the Princes and Princesses of the Blood Royal (lacking, alas, through ill-health, the presence of the aged Duke of Connaught), were thrilling in their unrehearsed dignity and inherent beauty.

But these processions, impressive though they were, did not so move the heart as did the entry of Queen Mary (with the Queen of Norway), the first Queen in our long annals to witness the Coronation of her son, and, shortly afterwards, of Their Majesties, whose procession may conveniently be described as consisting of six parts. The first included representatives of the Abbey, the Church of Scotland, and the Free Churches.<sup>2</sup> The second consisted of representatives of the Orders of Knighthood, accompanied by Heralds and Pursuivants. The third of

<sup>1</sup> In the following order: Japan, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Saudi Arabi, Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt, Brazil, Argentina, Italy, U.S.S.R., U.S.A., France, Turkey, Poland, China, Chile, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Yemen, Afghanistan, Siam, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Latvia, Peru, Lithuania, Nicaragua, Estonia, His Majesty the Emperor Haile Selassie I., Nepal, Dominica, Cuba, Hungary, Albania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Panama, Iraq, Mexico, Ecuador, Iran, Colombia, Hayti, Guatemala, Paraguay, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Liberia, Monaco, Salvador, San Marino.

<sup>2</sup> In the following order: the Congregational Union, the Presbyterian Church of England, the Baptist Union, the Methodist Conference, the National Free Church Council, the Federal Council.

Officers of the Royal Household, with Standards,<sup>1</sup> and the bearers of the Canopy for the King's Anointing. Then came the King's Ministers, headed by the Lord President of the Council, with the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, of Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. Their presence, at this point and in this capacity, created a precedent. The Statute of Westminster formalised the recognition, made first at Versailles in 1919, of the Dominions and independent sovereign States. All (except Ireland) were here represented, to watch the placing upon the King's head by the Primate of the ring of pure gold which in law alone unites this galaxy of monarchical republics. The Crown was that of Edward the Confessor, whose tomb the King faced when he was crowned. (Whence came the gold of which it was made? Probably from India, through Persia and Babylon, and by way of Rome.) Then came the Queen, preceded by the Archbishops, and her Regalia, and followed by her Ladies and by the four Heralds. The King's Regalia, borne by a numerous company of his subjects, most of whom had earned distinction in many paths of duty, were accompanied by the four Kings of Arms, the Great Officers of State, the Lord Mayor of London and the Speaker, representing the faithful Commons. Immediately before the King three Bishops bore the Paten, the Chalice and the Bible; after him came only members of his Court and personal entourage, including the Vice-Admiral of the United Kingdom, escorted by Gentlemen-at-Arms and Yeomen of the Guard. The King himself, in his velvet 'Cap of Maintenance,' bore his forty-one years lightly, walking with a carriage as youthful and erect as any of his pages, but more slowly than any of those who preceded him, itself a great physical strain in such circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> In the following order: India, S. Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the Union, the Principality of Wales, the Quarterings of the Royal Arms, the Royal Standard.



A diary is not the place for a description of the ritual of the Coronation, the purpose of which is to proclaim that the choice of the People has the blessing and the authority of Almighty God, like the religious ritual of marriage which follows upon the civil ceremony. The King took the oath, in a new form, 'to govern the peoples of Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, of your possessions and the other territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, and of your Empire of India, according to their respective laws and customs'; was invested with the emblems of religious authority; his feet were touched with golden spurs: he became a Knight; he was girded with the sword and, like David, became a warrior; he received the Sword of Justice, and became a Judge; the Sword of State, and he was charged with the prerogative of Mercy; he was Anointed, and received the Grace of God. On his head was placed that ancient Crown, surmounted by a Cross, and he was King. The whole story was told at length in *The Times* with customary dignity and literary grace; it was detailed with scarcely less felicity in broadcast commentaries that reached half the world, as the ceremony proceeded, through the 'machines constructed on principles as yet unknown,' which Macaulay foresaw, in the *Quarterly Review* of January 1830, would, a century later, 'be found in every house.' It was the supreme and almost the only example in the twentieth century of the reality and the value of continuity in human institutions. Indeed, one of the most eminent of German writers, lamenting the universal destruction of continuity abroad, said that the only true surviving symbols of the past are the Chairs of St. Peter at Rome and of King Edward at Westminster<sup>1</sup> upon the Stone of Destiny. The Chair itself, archaic in form, solitary in its position, venerable because as worthy of veneration as

<sup>1</sup> Wickham Legg, 'History of Coronation Service,' *Nineteenth Century and After*, May 1937.

any secular symbol in the world, riveted the attention of those who could see it. Below the Chair was the Great Stone on which thirty-seven Kings of England have been crowned: it came to us through Scotland, Ireland and Spain: it has been with us for a thousand years. Our forefathers claimed that Jacob laid his head upon it in the desert of Bethel before the vision came to him of that heavenly ladder which unites the visible to the unseen world. In the words of Paul Arène, '*Les légendes, comme les amours, gagnent à garder un peu de mystère*': that is true of the life of an individual and also of a nation. Before the Act of Anointing the choir told us how Zadok the priest anointed Solomon the King, but they did not sing the precise words of 1 Kings i. 39, 40, which read as follows (A.V.):

And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet: and all the people said, God save King Solomon. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent <sup>1</sup> with the sound of them.

'The people' hailed their 'undoubted King' on May 12 despite the rain with no less 'willingness and joy' than in David's old age; and the scholars of Westminster, with their cries of *Vivat rex*, were repeating the very words used by the people, as set forth in the Vulgate, when Samuel declared Saul to be the King. The music throughout could not have been bettered, though some would have preferred a larger share to have been given to boys' voices.

I have mentioned in an earlier chapter the remark of an old lady at the Jubilee that it was to her the Anniversary of the marriage of the King to his country. To-day's Coronation symbolised to the nation at large the mystical union of the Monarch with his country. The fact that

<sup>1</sup> The Great Bible of 1539 reads 'rang.'

King George VI had taken the place of one better-qualified by his education and experience for the task was counted to him for righteousness. We remembered that he had served at Jutland on board H.M.S. *Collingwood* under Jellicoe: we recollected that his marriage, ten years ago, had not been made so public an occasion as that of the Princess Marina to his brother. As Duke of York he had not sought the glare of publicity now centred upon him: yet he was playing the part nobly. Louis Gillet, a writer in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 1, in the most moving and most penetrating account of the Coronation that I have read in any tongue, thus concluded his article:

I cannot convey to my readers how beautiful and how great was the ceremony and how profound was the effect upon my mind of these ancient rites. It was clear—and it was the underlying drama of the Coronation—that the principal figure was not the King but the Primate of England. One realised how closely political power is here allied to religious power, and how deep-rooted is the resultant growth. England has succeeded where the Papacy has so often failed, in the days of Philip I and Henry VIII: one may learn more of English history from the sight of the Sovereigns walking between the Metropolitan Archbishops than from many books. And if the sight of the clergy in such force embarrasses us, who can question the beauty of this gesture of a nation and of the piety of a country which seeks to link mundane with celestial affairs, to invoke divine interest in secular matters, and, like ships at sea, to be guided by the stars?

It was a great act of faith, a marvellous and mystical creation. When one reflects upon the sudden upthrusts, unexpected eruptions, and the appearance of supermen which is the most striking phenomenon of our century, one is bound to conclude that the English behaviour is, as ours has long been, the most human, the most prudent and the most sagacious. ‘*Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificaverunt eam.*’ ‘Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it.’

The ceremony was by common consent staged with a perfection that did credit to all concerned, especially the Hereditary Earl Marshal. But the service itself might have been bettered by being brought more into harmony with things as they are. The King's Prime Ministers were in the procession, but played no part: all present would have liked to see them, and the representatives of India, perform the Act of Homage to the King, as did the Princes and certain Peers. The great preponderance of Peers and Peeresses and the position of the seats allotted to them had the effect of overstressing the hereditary aspect, already amply provided for in the procession. Many Peers present had never taken any part in the proceedings of the Upper House; some had probably not even troubled to take the oath of allegiance. Public servants of the greatest eminence, on the other hand, on whom successive monarchs have delighted to confer the highest honours, were relegated to seats in which they could neither see nor be seen.

Many felt, like Mr. Bernays, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> that it was not entirely fitting that the King should receive the Holy Communion in a manner so public in the presence of great numbers of non-Christians, and would have preferred that this part of the service should take place in a side chapel, in a spirit hardly attainable in the full glare of publicity.

The Coronation Service is an extraordinary monument of the past, peculiar to this country, one of the few States to whose people it has been granted to continue quietly to build upon the foundations laid by their fathers. Its significance would be better appreciated if an annotated edition of the service, with a historical introduction, were made available, and used as a text-book in all schools, thus enabling all teachers to bring ancient history to a modern point, and to give life and significance to the whole.

Every word spoken was clearly heard by many millions

<sup>1</sup> *The Spectator*, May 14, 1937.

outside the Abbey, and by everyone within. So perfect was the relaying system that the service could be followed on almost every grandstand on the route as well as in every city and hamlet in the Kingdom and over the greater part of the world. That single fact invested the ceremony with a wholly new significance which I, for one, had not in the least realised. The radio has invested language with fresh importance: men and women all over the world whose mother tongue was English felt that they were actual participants in the ceremony. In the streets, so soon as the service began, a hush fell upon the waiting crowds which deepened to complete silence at the moment of the crowning, when all those seated rose spontaneously to their feet, and all men bared their heads. The perfection attained prompts the reflection that there is no longer the same need to fill the Abbey with grandstands or to crowd it with some 7000 persons, of whom at least 1500 consist of Members of both Houses and their wives. The Lower House could be adequately represented by say about 100 persons, Privy Councillors and their wives: the Upper House by an equal number.

A rude contrast awaited those who left the Abbey.

The accidental death, in a private house, of the child of a participant in the ceremony was independently made the excuse by certain papers to issue to newsvendors throughout London and beyond bills referring to a 'tragedy' in connexion with the Coronation ceremony. The practice is, by modern commercial standards, no more open to objection than the action of Mr. Barnum in putting 'This way to the egress' over the 'Way out' and posting a man to collect pennies from those who hoped it would lead them to a monstrous female ogre, or perhaps a female negro. When we see on the handbill that an Indian Prince has been 'killed' in Paris our trained instinct tells us that his death was accidental or from natural causes, or the event would have constituted a 'mystery murder.'

When we learn in a certain newspaper of 'rumours in Gibraltar' about what happened a few hours earlier some hundreds of miles away we reflect, without malice, that rumours are not copyright and need, even when 'well authenticated,' have no other source than the imagination of the writer. It is wrong to blame journalists, dependent for their livelihood upon the whim of proprietors whose thoughts and boasts are not of service but of sales, and who have not hitherto given evidence of any desire to discourage the exploitation, under their instructions or with their assent, of the private grief of others for their personal profit or that of shareholders.

Careful foreign observers, at home in many lands, found us as a people as unaccountable as ever. Many expected to witness the enactment of a historical anachronism: they found themselves participants in a religious act; they thought monarchy to be a survival: they found it a living creed.

Two Austrians, fresh from Berlin, were at least as much interested in the faces of the spectators as in the procession. I met them after the Coronation: they had spent much time in the street and had ventured into Bethnal Green and Brondesbury, Shepherd's Bush and Southwark. We were still a puzzle to them: dirt festooned our historic buildings, like St. Paul's. On filthy hoardings appeals to join the Territorial or regular Army competed, unsuccessfully it seemed, with appeals to drink more medicine, more milk, more beer and spirits, to smoke more tobacco, to use more cosmetics, to eat more potatoes, bread, fish and fruit. We had, they assumed, no town or city planning, but were, it seemed, content with what we had. Few European peoples would tolerate such surroundings as they had seen in our poorer areas, or such waste of food and of the other good things of life, light, air and space. Yet the crowd was more lively, merrier and individually, they thought, more

intelligent than a German crowd would be even in the same circumstances.

Many villages all over the kingdom made a really beautiful display: people in small communities can act as a body and are never happier than on such an occasion when everyone can play a part. Individuality and spontaneity were apparent. In provincial towns chain-stores were in general an exception to the rule: the smaller the shop and the less wealthy the owner, the better the show. Some 'great houses' fronting on a main street or road of village were left almost undecorated and unilluminated. The owners had not risen to the height of the occasion: *noblesse oblige* is nowhere truer than in England, but its application to daily life is not quickly learned.

Only once did I see a discordant note, but it rang true. Upon one cottage in a small village was spread over the door a scroll upon which was inscribed in bold letters of gold upon a blue ground:

#### GOD SAVE THE DUKE OF WINDSOR

Below it was his portrait wreathed with flowers. A handsome old lady was tending the front garden, ready to justify her allegiance to any who dared bandy words with her. On another cottage I saw ten framed portraits, displayed in three groups. In the first, below the motto GOD BLESS OUR QUEENS, were Queen Victoria, Queen Alexandra, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: in the other, headed GOD BLESS OUR KINGS, King Edward VII, King George V, King Edward VIII and King George VI, and, in the centre, under a wreath of forget-me-nots and the words GOD BLESS OUR PRINCESSES, portraits of Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret. I cherish the memory of that display of happy memory, for I am old enough to have stood before Queen Victoria, as a cadet in a Guard of Honour.

Many attempts have been made to analyse the feelings underlying the remarkable exhibition of solidarity to the

Throne by writers whose views are inevitably coloured by their respective outlooks. Victoria in her later years was revered as an institution as well as honoured as a great lady, a good mother, and a wise ruler. Edward VII was a popular figure during his short reign because he shared the amusements and hobbies of a great number of his people and, as monarch, rose superior to party strife and gave his support and confidence, as Queen Victoria in her old age could not have done, to politicians of all parties no less than to the elder statesmen of an earlier day. George V, with Queen Mary, did much to broaden the foundations of the Throne: their devotion to duty, their robust common-sense, their wide interests and his complete detachment from party politics gave strength to a fabric which might under other auspices have been weakened by the stress of a great war. The King's addresses to his people on Christmas Day 1935 and at the Jubilee were so simple, so personal and yet so majestic that he achieved, at a single stroke, all that Queen Victoria had accomplished in her later years. Of King Edward VIII, a tragic figure, it is too soon to speak. King George VI had a very different bent of mind; the circumstances of his accession showed his subjects that he had inherited his father's sense of duty. His people recognised the difficulties of the task before him; many realised, for the first time, how essential is monarchy to a commonwealth, and how formidable and indeed impossible the task of discovering an alternative, should any party in the State desire to discover it, short of a new Union of Socialist Republics based upon the naked force of the senior partner. As Pindar sang more than two thousand years ago:

Mean men a State may shake  
But 'twere a giant's task to make  
Secure the shaken throne again  
Unless the kindly god should guide  
For mortal hand the ruling reign.



The 73rd Psalm, appointed for the Friday following the Coronation, begins, '*Quam bonus Israel*': 'Truly God is loving unto Israel.' It was in that spirit of thankfulness that the people rejoiced.

Speaking on the Civil List Resolution in the House of Commons on May 24, Mr. Maxton put 'the other side of the picture' with moderation:

It would be a mistake on the part of anybody to over-exaggerate the importance of last week. Do not let us imagine that there is a big section of the population that is all for 'bunting and bunkum.' They do not want that sort of thing all the time. The mass of the nation are already experiencing 'the morning after the night before' feeling. Sensible men and women know that the real business of life is more serious.

We are here to-day to consider how we can adequately and economically maintain the State fabric on a basis that shall appeal to the common sense of earnest men, rather than how we can create something that will cause hysteria among crowds. We have got to the stage of thinking of government in the terms of circuses. We are in a very decadent period. We have gone through a period through which other Empires have gone in the past, and we are coming to the beginning of the end in a decline of the moral fibre.

But Sir Archibald Sinclair, who followed from the Liberal side, commented thus:

In the large crowds of people who waited from three o'clock in the morning to see the King pass by I did not see hysteria, but loyal devotion to the Monarch and his family, as men and women who are doing their duty by the country in the state to which they have been called. The sense of duty which the Royal Family has shown is what has endeared them to the hearts of their people.

Jerry O'Neill came to see me again this month. After five months' steady work in a great factory he had been 'stood off' with several hundreds of others owing to slackness of trade. He had been earning good

money, but paid 25s. a week for food and lodging (sharing a bed with one and a bedroom with three others). He had been sending 10s. a week to his mother: now he had only his unemployment benefit of 14s. a week and a man in lodgings in Dagenham could not live on that. He wanted advice: should he hang about till the same factory got busy, or try elsewhere? For a man seeking work, Dagenham was a bad place to live: buses and trains cost money. He had no bicycle: his landlady had nowhere to keep it. He had tried half a dozen places without avail and was treated like dirt in some: the Employment Exchange held out little hope.

‘Did you see the Coronation?’ I asked him.

‘Yes, indeed, and well too and a great show it was, but,’ he added, ‘I was glad there was no Free State man in the Abbey.’

‘You always told me you would join the Navy if you could; how do you square that with this?’ I asked.

‘The Navy’s ours, and the Army is ours too,’ he replied, ‘but he’s not our King, though I wish him no harm.’

I did not attempt to argue the constitutional point; after all, he was Irish, and from Cork. I thought of a snatch of a song from *The Mountains of Mourne* headed ‘The Irish Boy in London’:

And I saw England’s King from the top of a bus,  
And though by the Sassenach opprest,  
God forgive me, I cheered with the rest.

I told him where to go and gave him some letters which might help. He turned to go, but stopped at the door; would there be a place for a maidservant near there, if he got work? ‘A sister?’ I asked. ‘Not exactly,’ he replied, ‘it’s an Irish girl in private service in Kensington I’m walking with: I’d like her to come too.’ I told him not to count his chickens so soon, but if he succeeds in finding work—and he was a brawny lad—

I fear a mistress will be deprived at short notice of a maid, and will be lamenting the instability of society nowadays, and the unreliability of modern maids. .

Mr. Baldwin, a leader of three and a leading member of five Parliaments in the space of twenty-eight years, said his *nunc dimittis* on Thursday, May 27, amid the sympathetic applause of members of all parties in a crowded House, who gave a scarcely less cordial farewell to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald on his last appearance on the Front Bench. Nothing in Mr. Baldwin's official life became him better than the leaving of it, long foreshadowed by his own utterances.

His leadership during a perilous year was crowned with success on May 12 : he had succeeded, with the help of the nation, in raising both the monarchy and Parliament in public esteem. The succession to the premiership was never in doubt. He left it at the height of his power, respected alike by political opponents and allies. Parliament loses but history will gain a great figure, for he will not grow old in our sight as those who are left grow old : the years will not condemn him unjustly as they have too often condemned others.

He was justly famous for the studied moderation of his political utterances, but he was quite capable of aggressive speech if he thought the moment demanded it. On March 17, 1931, in the course of a by-election in the St. George's Division of Westminster, he delivered the following speech as reported in *The Times*, March 18, 1931. I have omitted, in charity, his more scathing personal remarks :—

It is many years since I have had the honour of addressing a by-election meeting, and I have only broken through my rule, and a generally accepted rule of leaders of parties, because of the exceptional circumstances of this election. And it gives me an opportunity, as various observations have been made about me for

many years—it gives me a rare opportunity of making a few observations myself. I have said little. It is not worth it. I am going to say something to-day and some time later, if need arises, I can dot the i's and cross the t's.

Let me begin by saying that the Press of Great Britain is the admiration of the world for its fairness, the ability with which it is conducted, and the high principles of journalism to which it adheres. It is customary to place most of our evils to the debit of the War, and if there was one beastly thing in the War, it was propaganda. Propaganda was a poison gas that poisoned men's souls. It has left its mark in Russia; it has left its mark in one section of the British Press, and one section alone. The papers conducted by Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook are not newspapers in the ordinary acceptance of the term. They are engines of propaganda for the constantly changing policies desired, personal wishes, personal likes and dislikes of two men.

What are their methods? Their methods are direct falsehood, misrepresentation, half-truths, the alteration of the speaker's meaning by publishing a sentence apart from the context, such as you see in these leaflets handed out outside the doors of this hall; suppression and editorial criticism of speeches which are not reported in the paper. These are methods hated alike by the public and by the whole of the rest of the Press. . . .

The noble proprietors of these papers are always consistent in one thing—the increase of their sales and profits. While the *Daily Mail* is preaching the United Empire Party, and the *Daily Express* Empire Free Trade, what are these organs of opinion doing in America?

[Mr. Baldwin then read the following from the *New York Times* of February 17: 'The British *Daily Mail*. World's record in net paid daily circulation.' He proceeded:—Then it says: 'What a wonderful market the British is'; and then, in large letters, 'Let us help you. With the aid of the *Daily Mail* many American brands have become household words in Great Britain.' Then follows the very pertinent question, 'Why not yours? For the full facts and figures concerning the British market write or 'phone the American business manager, *Daily Mail*, New York City.']

The *Daily Express*, being more up to date in its methods, has published two fascinating documents well worth reading, which are being circulated in America. They tell how the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Express* have a most marvellous circulation, how they can get you all the buyers in this country, and urge American makers of every conceivable kind of product to get into communication with the papers for the purpose of introducing their goods into the British market. So much for the United Empire Party and Empire Free Trade. If anything was wanted to show the utter contempt of that Press for the way in which people allow themselves to be deluded by the stuff that is put across, it is that open advertising in America to get American goods sold in this country. . . .

I rejoice to think that Duff Cooper is not the only one of my young men who are willing to give up a safe seat to fight St. George's and stand a stream of mud and abuse that is flung at him day after day. It is no credit to me, an old man, to be standing up as I have done, and am doing, against this kind of abuse. My position is made; let them throw me out if they can. But these young men know that they are marked men by that Press. They will never be reported; they will be misrepresented and abused. But they are ready to stick it, and I say all honour to them. You are going to have a member of Parliament of whom you will be proud, but he will be the first to acknowledge he is not the only one in our party, and that is a good hope for the future. There is young blood ready to take its part, and I welcome it. (Cheers and a voice: 'And courageous women; we have Miss Cazalet.') I quite agree. In fighting for Duff Cooper you are not only fighting for the best type of Englishman, but you are striking a blow that will resound through London for the decencies of public life and the decencies of honest British journalism.

Mr. Duff Cooper was returned triumphantly. In due course Mr. Baldwin took office under Mr. MacDonald, and returned some years later as Prime Minister. He could have done none of these things had he not fought and defeated the Press with their own weapons. Mr. Neville Chamberlain may have to do it again.

The only serious criticism that can fairly be levelled against Lord Baldwin is that he did not play in foreign affairs a part commensurate with his opportunities and capacity. Again and again he might have intervened with advantage in diplomatic negotiations with Germany or by means of personal conversations with Herr Hitler. There was no lack of precedents for such action by a Prime Minister. It is generally believed that in July 1936 he had formed the intention of going in person to Berlin but was deterred by more or less fortuitous considerations. It is widely felt that he allowed the Cabinet to drift into rearmament as a consequence of a deadlock in the sphere of foreign affairs which direct personal conversations with Herr Hitler might have ended. He had, in fact, the defects of his qualities.

The manner of his departure from was as unobtrusive as his entry into Parliament: I witnessed his last appearance before, in his own words, he handed in his time-board. I saw him pass through the Lobby, in support of the Civil List Bill, for the last time.

The old Commandments stand :  
 ' In courage keep your heart,  
 In strength lift up your hand.'

My heart, not my head, is responsible for this epitaph on his life as a commoner, and I do not think he will feel it to be wholly inappropriate.

## CHAPTER XXVI

JUNE 1937

You cannot hope to bribe or twist,  
Thank God, the British journalist ;  
But seeing what the man will do,  
Unbribed, there's no occasion to.

HUMBERT WOLFE.

THE outstanding domestic event of June was the appearance of Mr. Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister, his assumption of this office at the behest of His Majesty being followed by his unanimous election as leader of the Conservative Party. It was, on this occasion, a matter of form, but it was not a formal occasion: he was greeted with no less enthusiasm by his supporters than had greeted his predecessor at the height of his power. In acknowledging the motion for his election, moved by Lord Derby (seventy-two) and seconded by Mr. Churchill (sixty-three), he reminded his audience of his age—he is sixty-eight—adding that the most alarming aspect of the duties of a Prime Minister is the knowledge that in all the perplexing problems which rise up day after day the ultimate responsibility for the final decision must rest with the Prime Minister.

No major point of policy [he continued] can be decided, no fateful step can be taken without the assent, either active or passive, of the Prime Minister, and if things go wrong he can never escape this reflection, 'I might have prevented this if I had thought or acted differently.'

I believe it is that ultimate and inescapable responsibility which now lies in front of me.

His personal responsibility is not, in fact, less than that of those leaders of Continental countries whom some of our newspapers are fond of abusing as dictators; the real difference is that they can, and usually do, act upon their decisions without the assent of any elected body and are, to that extent, deprived both of the support and the protection that the House of Commons affords to the King's Ministers. Assured of support in this quarter a Prime Minister, like the President of the United States, can take steps and risks which few dictators would care to essay.

Like Mr. Baldwin, he continued, he regarded it as of the first importance to preserve the unity of the Conservative Party, to-day the most powerful political instrument in the country. He was not, he said, born a Conservative, but a Liberal; he was long a Liberal Unionist. His acceptance as leader of the Conservative Party was a proof of the catholicity of that party which, as Disraeli said, was nothing if it was not national.<sup>1</sup>

It was a notable speech; as simple and as neatly phrased as was his tribute to Mr. Baldwin in the House of Commons on the previous day, when he was reminded, with the utmost good temper, by Mr. Attlee, the Leader of the Opposition, that, under the Parliamentary system in this country, the Opposition could not wish him a long tenure of office and would do nothing to make his position easier, but, on the contrary, would do all they could to expel him and his colleagues from office—all of which is very puzzling to foreign guests who are strangers to our ways.

On June 9 I delivered an address on 'Spain—an Englishman's view,' to the Gesellschaft für Handel Industrie u. Wissenschaft, under the presidency of Baron

<sup>1</sup> From a speech in Merchant Taylors' Hall, 1859: 'I have always striven to distinguish that which was eternal from that which was but accidental in its [the Conservative Party's] opinions. I have always striven to assist in building it upon a broad and national basis, because I believed it to be a party peculiarly and essentially national.'



von Bethmann, in Frankfurt, which I had visited three years before, soon after Herr Hitler attained power. Though much that I said must have been very unpalatable to my hearers, who included all the leading officials, I was listened to with the greatest courtesy and attention. Dinner followed at small tables in the garden of the Club, and conversation which lasted till the small hours of the morning.

After paying a few calls next morning I went by air to Berlin via Erfurt under a cloudless sky. I could follow the course of the great arterial roads under construction or staked out in readiness for the engineers. Some parts were already complete. Straight as any railway, with gradients as gentle, divided down the centre into two lanes, with no level crossings, there is little to interest or please the eye of the motorist. On the contrary the monotony is distressing and is said in Germany to be the cause of many fatal accidents, due to the driver falling asleep at the wheel.

The airports in all large towns in Germany are popular places of resort: they are well designed, with ample room for patrons of the fine open-air restaurants to watch the great machines of half a dozen countries coming and going. At Rotterdam and Amsterdam on the way to Frankfurt via Cologne I saw parties of elementary school-children on the edge of the aerodrome with their teachers being shown over two machines and allowed to watch the traffic from a point of vantage—an example we might usefully imitate.

I had friends to see in Berlin as well as in Frankfurt, and with them I had many conversations the upshot of which, extending over three days, is not easy to summarise: it is easier to form views after three days than after three months, and easier after three months than three years. Much of necessity depends on whom one meets and on the weight attaching in one's own mind to their

individual opinions. I found almost as great a variety of responsible opinion in Germany as one finds in similar circles in England, and in private conversation it was freely expressed. There are men who are anti-Hitler just as we have anti-monarchists in England; we tolerate them because they are not dangerous to the stability of the monarchy: they are not tolerated in Germany any more than Trotskyists are tolerated in Russia, or minorities hostile to the powers that be are tolerated in Japan, Persia, Iraq, Turkey, Poland, Austria, Italy, Greece or in many other States. The anti-Hitlerites are not hostile to him as a man but to the ideas which he embodies. He attained power by means of the ballot-box, he retains it by virtue of his personality. His personal position to-day is as strong as that of any British Prime Minister for a hundred years and stronger than that of most foreign monarchs. 'What,' one asks, 'will happen when he dies?' The reply is that whoever he nominates as his successor will for that reason be accepted—at least for some years.

The Prussian Junker, once the bugbear of Liberal nurseries, is not the power behind him. Few of the leading men in Germany to-day hail from Prussia.

'Is Hitler, then, the pawn of capitalists, as some suggest?' Certainly not: industries have not been nationalised, but industrialists are, jointly with those whom they employ, required to conform to rules laid down in the public interest in the management of their business, in which the employees themselves have more to say than in this country.

'Is the Reichswehr, then, the real power behind Hitler?' The bearing of military officers in public does not suggest it: the Reichswehr is independent of the National Socialist Party and holds itself aloof from politics, though of course, as in every country, policy is to some extent dependent upon the limitations at any given moment of the available military force.

The part played by the daily and weekly Press in Europe is of some importance. A superficial study of the popular Press in England, Russia, Germany and Italy, and France and Poland, suggests that hatred and contempt of neighbours is being preached in every country, and hatred of minorities within national boundaries in a few. The *Morning Post* recently urged the exclusion of the Southern Irish from England on various grounds. The attitude of the German and Polish Press towards Jews is notorious, as is that of the Press of Moscow towards Trotskyists and *Kulaks*. The streamer headlines invented in America have spread all over the world; but 'sensational-mongering' has immunised those who are most exposed to it. Like the public in Hilaire Belloc's *Cautionary Tales* who knew that Matilda had once given a false alarm to the fire brigades, when the emergency actually arose,

Every time she shouted ' Fire ! '   
 They only answered ' Little Liar ! '   
 (And therefore when her Aunt returned,   
 Matilda and the House were Burned.')

But the effect of violent writing upon the public is, I believe, far less than is commonly supposed. It has actually had little effect in England; Frenchmen have informed me that the French Press overplayed their hand when the Demilitarised Zone was reoccupied, and failed, in consequence, to arouse as much public feeling as they hoped. The stridency of the German Press impresses Russians and some Englishmen, and the attacks of the Russian Press arouse resentment in Germany to-day, as in England a few years ago, when the official Moscow Press was full of foul insults to our Royal Family and leading statesmen. But the internal effect is subject to the law of diminishing returns.

I have studied volumes of anti-Italian and anti-German cuttings from English newspapers in Rome and Berlin

respectively, and I have compared them in London with volumes of anti-English cuttings from Italian and German newspapers. In each case the cumulative impression is painful but, I believe, misleading precisely because the effect on the daily newspaper reader is neither concentrated nor cumulative. The effect of press-cuttings cannot be gauged by the laborious analysis in a foreign capital of material produced by a process analogous to that of filtering or centrifuging whereby all impurities found in many thousands of gallons of liquid are collected for examination in a single flask. We all consume enough of many poisons in the course of a year to kill us if we swallowed any one of them in the course of a meal.

I see little to choose between the presentation of foreign news in the Press in any country or in the selection by correspondents or editors of items of foreign news, for the temptation to feed national prejudice by 'tendencious' selectivity is irresistible. How can a German or Italian correspondent refrain from telegraphing, to countries where strikes are now unknown, that trade disputes during March aggregated 220,000 working days, during April 480,000, and during May little fewer? How can they help reminding their countrymen who do suffer little from unemployment to-day that on March 15, 1937, there were 1,350,000 registered as in search of employment and, in the same breath, that the Regular Army is short of 2000 officers and 23,000 men and the Territorial Army in even worse case?

How can a British correspondent resist the temptation to make the most of the dispute between Church and State in Germany and of temporary shortages of food-stuffs which prevent the middle and upper classes from getting as much as they are accustomed to of certain comestibles, or of the burden of military and labour service, for the edification of the only nation in Europe which has stuck to the voluntary or mercenary system?

## CHAPTER XXVII

JULY 1937

Most men resent contempt more than injustice and can bear any injury better than disgrace. War will justify an unfriendly act, but sarcastic and censorious expressions are ascribed to hatred and malignity.

PLUTARCH. *Life of Timoleon.*

THE Report of the Palestine Commission which was issued in July stirred Parliament, but not the country at large: it raised high winds at Geneva, but nowhere else. Its unsparing honesty was widely praised: its literary qualities were, perhaps, over-emphasised by those who supported its conclusions. The historical introduction told us in fact less than some of us knew before, and much less than we should know, of the circumstances which led to the Balfour Declaration and of its relation to the MacMahon Letters. In some respects it was inconsistent with Mrs. Dugdale's account in her *Life of Lord Balfour* (vol. ii, chapter xi). It shows conclusively the historical inaccuracy of the account of the origin of the Balfour Declaration given by Mr. Lloyd George in his *War Memoirs* (vol. ii, pp. 584 *sqq.*), where he describes British policy in Palestine as a kind of *quid pro quo* for the genius of Dr. Chaim Weizmann in discovering and developing a process for the manufacture of acetone. It ignores, doubtless of set purpose, the passionate hostility to Zionism of Mr. Edwin Montagu, a member of the Cabinet at the time, and of many, perhaps the majority of, leading Jews in this country and America, and the recorded doubts of the British Cabinet. A full publication of all official documents bearing upon the subject, on the lines

of Messrs. Gooch and Temperley's classic series of 'Documents relating to the Origins of the Great War,' is much to be desired.

The difficulties—personal, economic, racial and religious—are tremendous. Yet a careful study of the Royal Commission's Report left me with the conviction that though the remedies proposed are drastic they are less impracticable, and on a long view more hopeful, than any alternative which the wit of man can devise, and should be supported by all concerned. It may well be that by our support, in complete good faith, of Zionism we did a great wrong to Jewry as well as to Syria. Vagueness of language, often mistaken for diplomacy, and infirmity of purpose, born of war-weariness, did much to render our aims nugatory though they may always have been impossible of fulfilment. Mr. Lloyd George and those who laboured with him at Versailles have much to answer for, but, in the words ascribed by Plutarch to Cato the Censor, 'It is hard that I, who have lived with one generation, should be obliged to make my defence to those of another.' It is hard for us to recapture the ardent feelings, the haste, the hopes and the fears of those days.

Everything will depend upon the manner in which the recommendations of the Royal Commission are put into practice, both in Whitehall and in Palestine. In the words of Richard Burton in West Africa over eighty years ago, 'What England has done, England must undo.' An exchange of populations over a large scale is, as Greece has proved, not impossible.

Three million houses have been built since the Armistice—of which about 900,000 by local authorities, the rest by private enterprise. At an average of six to the acre, including new roads and service stations, they must cover about 500,000 acres. It is reasonable to assume that arterial roads and road-widening, aerodromes

and public works of one kind and another, including reservoirs, power stations, and new gravel pits, account for 100,000 acres each, making a total area lost to cultivation of 800,000 acres in the last ten years, and this may well be an underestimate. It is customary to call this 'land development' and to refer to land dedicated to food crops as 'sterilised'—an abuse of terms only possible in the mouths of an urban race.

The statement of the Ministry of Agriculture that the arable acreage has fallen in the last twelve months by 273,000 acres should be read in the light of these figures. Yet few countries in Europe produce such good crops per acre as we do even now. Uncontrolled urbanisation inevitably entails national decay; some of us, like John Bright, already hear the beating of the wings of the Angel of Death, but the sound can scarcely be heard above the tumult of the cities. This year's legislation to encourage the improvement of land now under grass as well as under the plough is a small but important step in the right direction.

The same sad story is revealed in the successive reports of the Forestry Commissioners. For whatever reasons—Estate Duties are a major factor—we seem to have lost the instinct for making the fullest use of land. The greatest offenders are great corporations, departments of State, public authorities, and public utility companies. Between them they own vast areas, perhaps 10 per cent. of all the land in the country, but few of them have any real feeling of responsibility for making the most of it. More often than not, when I inquire as to the ownership of some derelict bit of land, adjoining a town, rank with noxious weeds and dying trees, I find that it belongs to a public body or a great public utility company.

They have the funds and they have the staff to execute long-term schemes which would go far to add to the beauty of semi-urban England and to the enjoyment of

the urban masses, but they seem in general unconscious of anything but their immediate task, viz. to provide water or gas, electricity, or a smooth road surface for motorists. How few footpaths in my own county can compete with the road in comfort—how few are suited for a pram: how few are the roads whose broad verges are not encumbered with heaps of road material or dirt, making them impassable for horses or cattle. Angling is the favourite sport of a great number of Londoners. What do the Thames or Lee River Conservancy Boards or the Canal Companies do to stock the waters which they control, in return for the fees they levy? Is it quite absurd to suggest that the reservoirs where the rain water is stored before treatment should be made attractive and accessible to anglers? Could not the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries take this aspect of national recreation under its wing?

We are prone to blame our Victorian forefathers for short-sightedness: will future generations have reason to be grateful to us? As I travel up to town I see broad acres, close to new housing estates in the Lea Valley, being stripped of the gravel and abandoned, a few months later, as shallow ponds; 'it pays' to do so, that is to say, it pays an individual in this decade, but how grievous the injury to those who come after. The housing estates close by are almost without open spaces: no one even talks of the need for parks for the half-million persons living from Hackney to Cheshunt. The Walthamstow marshes could provide twice as many football fields and many amenities for those who only desire sun and air, but no one seems to be responsible for filling up the old ditches. I feel inclined to cry, like Shakespeare's Messenger (*Henry I*, Act I, Scene 1):

Awake, awake, English nobility,  
Let not dull sloth dim your honours new begot,  
The fleur de luces in your arms are cropped,  
Of England's coat one half is cut away!



## CHAPTER XXVIII

AUGUST 1937

Marchez à la tête des idées de votre siècle :  
Ces idées vous suivent et vous soutiennent.  
Marchez à leur suite, elles vous entraînent.  
Marchez contre elles, elles vous renversent.

LOUIS NAPOLÉON. *Du prison de Ham* (1841).

ONE Tuesday towards the end of the month I left Liverpool Street with two small boys who wanted to see something of Europe. We had hoped to spend a day sight-seeing at Flushing, for the Island of Walcheren will long be remembered by military men, as Wellington called soldiers, as the scene of perhaps the worst-managed campaign in our long military history when, 128 years ago, we set fire to Flushing with incendiary bombs and landed 40,000 men to keep Napoleon out. A few months later we departed leaving 400 who had died in battle and 4000 dead of fever. Those permanently disabled by the prevalent ague were far more numerous. Three years later we were rejoicing over Waterloo, but, on this occasion, strategy and tactics were in the hands, not of the younger Pitt, but of Wellington, who knew almost as much of politics as he did of soldiering.

Such were my thoughts and of such things my paternal talk as we walked round the town. But it began to rain and the wind was cold, so we took a train to a little town near the border. Next morning we went across Belgium by train. The sun shone, and the country looked so attractive that we got out at Vielsam and for some hours walked quite at random through the grassy forest tracks

over the hills to St. Vith, a pleasant little town which, with Eupen and Malmédy, was taken from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and awarded to Belgium after a mock plebiscite. At St. Vith I heard, as in Eupen and Malmédy three years ago, nothing but German spoken: it is taught, along with French, in the schools; the local newspapers are all in German. The Belgian Government has adopted a wise middle course in cultural matters which seems to be working well.

That evening in the bar of the small inn in which we stayed I noticed a brawny youth—German in appearance—who was the centre of a vivacious group. He had just arrived and his heavy pack was by his side. I invited him to join me at dinner, when he explained that he was a *Sudetendeutscher* from Czechoslovakia, a university graduate who, because of his race, was denied employment of any sort. Employment in official posts with official contractors, or in official institutions and most unofficial ones, was barred to him and to thousands like him. He had come to Belgium to learn French in the hope that it might lead to employment.

‘Why not Germany?’ I asked. ‘They are short of men and no able-bodied man is unemployed against his will there.’

‘I am not allowed to enter Germany,’ he replied; ‘they told me when they gave me my passport that if I went to Germany I should be deprived of it when I returned. The Reich treats us officially as foreigners, it cannot do otherwise: my father and mother were Austrians. We want to be loyal to the new State, but how can we? We are treated in Czechoslovakia almost worse than Jews in Germany.’ He had brothers and sisters at home even less fortunate than he, and denied all hope of marriage, so bad was unemployment among German Czechs. His conversation confirmed what I had heard a few months earlier from Professor Arnold Toynbee on the treatment of racial minorities in Czechoslovakia.

I offered him wine and tobacco; he would touch neither, saying that he must forgo luxuries he could not hope to afford. When we were alone after dinner he began to talk more freely. He had spent a month in Germany, of which his passport showed no trace. He had walked quietly over the Luxembourg-German frontier and back, after a careful reconnaissance, into Belgium proper. No one in Germany took him for anything but what he was—a German. He had a light tent: he could cook his own food; he had walked in company with other German youths. He had attended national celebrations in German cities. Germany—the new Germany—was a centre for loyalty and fired his imagination and hopes. Germany held the future of Europe in her hands: he hoped that the next step towards putting Europe straight would be in Czechoslovakia. He felt at home in Germany as nowhere else:

*Hier leb' ich, hier lieb' ich,  
Hier ruh' ich mich aus.  
Hier ist meine Heimat  
Hier bin ich zu Haus.*

We parted next morning—he on his way to Clervaux, we to Prüm, in the Eifel. Two hours' walk along the high road brought us to Schöneberg, where we took lunch at a wayside inn with three men who had all fought for Germany in the World War, but were now Belgians. Half an hour later we presented ourselves at the Belgian customs post. The young man in charge waved us cheerily on, not troubling to record our names. The road was in perfect order, the scenery of great beauty, and the tourist season at its height, but no car passed us in either direction.

An hour or so later we reached the frontier, marked only by a small stone. The heights were heavily wooded, the valleys well cultivated as far as the eye could reach. I looked in vain, for many miles on either side, for super-

fluous sidings or roads. It is clear that the Belgian line of defence does not coincide with the new frontier.

In the valley below us lay the German customs post ; we could have walked past it or round it had we so desired, for there was no guard or watchman and the office doors were locked. I rang a bell, and the customs official appeared, stamped our passports and recorded our cash assets, but did not search our belongings. He showed me, with pride, his war wounds, and wished us God-speed.

An hour later we reached the little village of Bleich Alp, with its fine church and slow-moving oxen drawing sleds in the paved streets. Prüm was 14 kilometres away ; the Post Office motor coach, which drove up soon after we had refreshed ourselves with beer and milk, tempted us. Half an hour later we were in Prüm, set deep in the folds of a narrow valley. We spent an hour at the swimming-bath—free to all—before inquiring at the station for a train to Trier. A man, not drunk but ‘drink-taken,’ entered the waiting-room and, sitting next a young woman, put his arm round her, disregarding her protests. I intervened and told him to leave the room : he retorted by calling the company inside and outside the room to witness that I was an American Bolshevik : he knew my sort, for he had lived in Chicago. I maintained a smiling silence. His protests grew louder : the boys with me were not my children—I had kidnapped them ! At this moment a little policeman arrived—summoned, no doubt, by the station staff. Standing behind my burly inquisitor, he listened for a time, then tactfully approached him. ‘You must tell all this to me,’ he said ; ‘it is very important ; I must write it all down : come inside.’ The door of the station-master’s office closed upon him : the key was turned, and the policeman approached me. Had I been annoyed ? I assured him I had only been amused. Had the young lady been annoyed ? She wished to lay no complaint, but asserted

that the man was not fit to travel. The little policeman took counsel with the station-master and decided that he would be sufficiently punished by being made to miss his train. The station-master apologised to us both and the incident was closed.

We spent Friday morning seeing the sights of Trier, the most notable of which, to my mind, are the Paulinuskirche—of all baroque churches that I know the most perfectly designed and delicately executed—and the Weinmuseum, in which botany, history, geology and meteorology are ingeniously linked with engineering, commerce, and gastronomics. The market-place was crowded; the streets full of life. A travelling exhibition of *Volk und Rasse*—an elementary and popular exposition of eugenics—had just arrived and was drawing large audiences.

Then by rail down the Mosel to Cochem and up river thence by a small motor boat to Bruttig, whence a rough track winds very steeply up the cliffs through terraced vineyards to the uplands, and thus across the Cochem bend through woods to Treis. Everyone who was not working in the fields seemed to be collecting basketfuls of blackberries for jam, jelly and wine. Tiny children, with stained mouths, and old men and women were in the bushes and standing along the hedges: a few were picking wild raspberries, others bilberries. We passed two or three parties of boys on their way to the next youth hostel, singing as they went, the youngest in front so that the pace might not be forced; a forest-guard was showing one group how his sporting-gun worked. The road was lined with plum and apple trees—an additional attraction to Hitler *Jugend* as well as to British youth.

We had intended to take the river steamer to Koblenz next morning from Carden, a village some miles downstream. We arrived in good time and, having warned the pier attendant, who combined this with other duties,

sat down to breakfast on the terrace of an inn close by. The boat came round the bend but did not stop, despite the tardy cries of the attendant. Some mischievous boys had lowered the warning flag at the pier-head, and stood on the embankment laughing at his explanations to us. The innkeeper apologised ; he did not know what things were coming to these days—youth had no respect for age : the fact was, the attendant had had words with the boys of the village, who had not been allowed to dive off the pier. This was their revenge.

There was no other boat or train that morning, so we shouldered our packs and walked down the valley till we came to a backwater, where we bathed : then on again to Müden, a wholly unspoiled village, where we took train to Koblenz. A few minutes after our arrival on the banks of the Rhine we boarded a river steamer for Mainz and went up-stream. I know no similar journey so full of movement and incident. The traffic on the river and by rail and road on either bank, both of goods and passengers in either direction, was heavy. We passed a dozen steamers, chartered by the National Socialist *Kraft durch Freude* organisation. Each bore the name of the place whence it came—Düsseldorf, the Saar, Hamburg and Mainz, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, etc. Each gave us a rousing cheer, and, as we passed, an improvised concert party lined up on our boat and sang with deep-chested harmony *Die Wacht am Rhein* and other favourite songs. There was dancing and music, some love-making and much tippling of Rhine wine, but little or no drunkenness. The scene and the crowd reminded me of Blackpool and the Isle of Man, but still more of Calverley's *Dover to Munich* :

On, on the vessel steals ;  
Round go the paddle-wheels,  
And now the tourist feels  
As he should ;

For King-like rolls the Rhine,  
And the scenery's divine  
And the victuals and the wine  
Rather good.

. . . . .  
We've a nun here called Thérèse,  
Two couriers out of place

. . . . .  
And three youths in scarlet caps  
Drinking chocolate and schnapps—  
A diet which perhaps  
Has its merits.

Men talked to me of the World War: one had been a prisoner; one wounded; one had learned a little English from British troops on the Rhine; another had a sister who had married a sergeant.

'We must be on the same side next time.' 'The English people are like us, and we like them, but we want our colonies back.'

'We have killed Communism here—we shall kill it in Spain; but who will kill it in France?' 'We have confidence in ourselves and in our leaders: can you say as much?' Such were snatches from the talk of the deck, from the lips of the foremen, mechanics, and minor railway officials.

They wanted to know about Shanghai, and about almost simultaneous riots in Mombasa, Jamaica, Mauritius and Trinidad and the Bahamas (all accompanied by bloodshed), and troubles in Palestine and Iraq. Were these spontaneous? We seemed unlucky in the Mediterranean. Was it not the hidden hand of Russia that kept the world on tenterhooks?

The sun had just set when we reached Bingen. We landed and went up the hill for a meal at the Burg Klopp. It was in the possession of a *Kraft durch freude* party from Düsseldorf—noisy, happy, and not wholly free in a few

cases from the lamentable but human tendency towards inebriety which is apt to be a by-product of returning prosperity. Half an hour later they left to rejoin their womenfolk on the ship and the regular clientèle began to arrive, young men of all ranks in the uniform of the S.A.S.S. Arbeitsdienst or Reichswehr, with others in civilian clothes, each with his dancing partner. (Evening dress seems to have gone more than ever out of fashion in Germany.)

I spent some hours in the streets and saw contingents of a *Kraft durch Freude* party leave the ship, men and women in fours, singing songs as they marched, as Longfellow recorded in *Hyperion* over eighty years ago, to the sound of an improvised concertina and banjo band, to the Town Hall, where the local S.A. band was already playing to an admiring crowd. There was plenty of money in circulation. Badges and mementoes, fruit and flasks of wine were being freely bought.

Next day we met by the wayside three boys from a secondary school in the Midlands. They had come from Cologne on their cycles, sleeping in Youth Hostels and occasionally doing some climbing. Well dressed for what they were doing in corduroy jerkins and shorts, stalwart and independent, with just enough of the language to 'carry on with,' they had already picked up a couple of German boys of their age and were touring with them. They had just had a swim in the Rhine and shown their mettle. They could beat the Germans up the hills, they told me: they were non-smokers and 'teetotal for the trip, to please the Head.' As members of the school O.T.C. they could look the Hitler *Jugend* square in the face, and were clearly doing so.

Down the Rhine came a flotilla of canoes, each paddled by two youths, bare to the waist: on the banks were scores of such canoes, lying on the grass near little tents where the owners were cooking a meal. They are mostly collapsible and, being furnished with a little



wheeled undercarriage, can be taken by train anywhere with a minimum of risk and trouble. The English boys were already planning a joint trip with their German friends in such craft, and making calculations as to costs.

A day or two later we were on the summit of the Loreley rocks overlooking the Rhine, perhaps the busiest river gorge in the world, with its four lines of railway fully occupied and the river traffic which is equivalent to at least another two lines. A few hundred yards away two hundred men of a Public Works Service Camp, bare to the waist, were building a great open-air theatre or *Tink-stätte* at a point where the audience would have a glorious view of their beloved Rhineland. After work was over—they work short hours—came a forty-minute drill with spades: then kit inspection. Soon afterwards some men in their neat undress uniform were hastening down the cliffs through the vineyards by the narrow track to the town below: others remained to dine and, later on, to sing, as only Germans can sing. I had seen many such camps elsewhere in Germany: they are part of a national scheme of education as well as of military service. Are we to rest content with bringing a few hundred youths from different walks of life together in a holiday camp for a fortnight a year? Germany believes in bringing all youths, whatever their education, to live and work together at something constructive for six months. We regard a holiday camp on similar lines for four hundred boys under Royal patronage as a great achievement, and a holiday camp for sixty girls—two from each of fifteen ‘public’ schools and thirty from poor homes—as a notable event, requiring members of the Episcopacy and of Society as patrons. German girls by thousands of all classes go walking and camping every year and, in addition, the well-to-do girl of good education is encouraged to undertake not ‘charitable’ or ‘club’ work, but to live with and help her less fortunate sisters in their own homes. These plans have succeeded and

Germans are proud of them—none more so than the young officer of the camp with whom I spoke that evening. I greatly prefer the artless spontaneity of British youth to the tutored purposefulness of the Hitler *Jugend*, but I feel that we have something to learn, and to learn is not necessarily to copy.

Two days later we spent the night in a perfect little sixteenth-century village, completely unspoiled and quite unconscious of the fact. The church was beautiful within and without and in perfect order: the war memorial as delicate, as simple and as true to its surroundings and to those it commemorated as almost any I have seen in England, and the little garden round it was lovingly cared for. Morning service was well attended: men on one side of the church, women on the other, the children on little fald-stools in front. This is a side of German life as real as anything we read of in telegrams from Berlin, and it has deeper roots than Herr Rosenberg's philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXIX

SEPTEMBER 1937

### Germany and Spain

Eyns mans redde ein halbe redde  
Man sal sie billich verhören bede.

One man's speech is half a speech  
They should in justice both be heard.

Inscription in the old Rathaus of  
Frankfurt, alluded to by Goethe  
(*Aus meinen Leben*, Bk. I).

I speak in the name of the entire German nation when I say that all of us most sincerely desire to root out an enmity whose sacrifices are out of all proportion to any possible gain.

HERR HITLER, Reich Chancellor,  
October 14, 1933.

A FEW weeks later I was one of several hundred foreign guests at the Nuremberg Reichsparteitag or Party Congress. It was not less impressive, and even more perfectly organised than the preceding Congress in 1936 (see p. 193). Lack of space precludes any description of the ceremonies or of the speeches, which struck, in general, a more confident but not more aggressive note than before. The British Ambassador, with most of his colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps, including the representatives of General Franco, were present for part of the week and I had the advantage from time to time of conversations with some of them. The general feeling among those with whom I spoke was that until the position in Spain was clarified—and the eventual supremacy of

General Franco seemed already almost certain—there could be no real *détente* in international affairs. Nor, in finance and commerce, was any further improvement likely: President Roosevelt, whose policies dominate America as effectively as those of Mussolini and Hitler dominate their respective countries, was regarded as a disturbing factor. Herr Hitler appeared to me, when he received a number of foreign guests one afternoon, to have mellowed. The note of urgency, of passionate desire no longer to be misunderstood abroad and to gain the allegiance of doubters at home had given place to one of sober confidence that unity at home, and willing sacrifice by the nation of immediate comforts, would eventually be rewarded.

Not all my doubts were, however, resolved. It is still true that Germans see themselves as destined to be either the victor or the victim in a world in which the clash of arms is inseparable from life and progress, rather than as one of a comity of nations. They see in Soviet Russia, with its vast population and immense military forces, which were in existence long before they began to rearm, a menace to European civilisation. They see the British Empire as the possessors of the one essential raw material—unoccupied or unutilised land—which they believe themselves to stand in need of and therefore to deserve, as a matter of justice as well of expediency, to the extent of some or all of their former colonies.

We think and act in terms of politics, Germans in terms of strategy and *Wehrmacht*. The antithesis is inescapable, but a *modus vivendi* is not impossible.

Events in Spain were clearly all-important: I had already decided to go there to see what I could for myself. The representative in London of the Governments of Valencia and Barcelona promised me facilities, as did General Franco's agent. The latter made no conditions;

the former indicated that it was preferable that I should go to Valencia and Madrid after and not before visiting Salamanca, and I made my arrangements accordingly. At the last moment I was informed that I should be refused a permit to Valencia: no one who had been to Salamanca could be allowed to enter what may now fairly be called 'red' Spain, in view of the recent celebrations in honour of Lenin and in gratitude to Moscow.

So I had to be content with a visit to one side only, and left Stuttgart one morning in a Lufthansa machine on its way to Lisbon, stopping for a night in Marseilles, as the shortening day made it difficult to reach Lisbon before dusk. The contrast between Stuttgart and the greatest and most polyglot seaport of the Mediterranean was sharp, but I enjoyed good oysters at a shilling a dozen. The prevalence of party strife, abolished in Germany, was indicated by posters on the walls—the Communist party was active, as also the Doriotists and the Parti Social Français and several Civil Service Federations. Prices were rising much faster than wages: hotel prices were relatively higher than in Germany, and food apparently dearer. I met a number of bluejackets enjoying a few hours' leave from patrol duty in the Mediterranean—apparently a very unpopular form of service.

Next morning we left again for Salamanca, passing over the salt plains of the Bouches du Rhône and the Camargues, over Saint Marie de la Mer and Cette; thence inland over Toulouse and Pau; then, rising to 10,000 feet, we surmounted the clouded Pyrenees, the snow-capped Pic du Ger alone being visible, descending a little near Pamplona and, leaving Valladolid and Burgos to the west, arrived at Salamanca after a flight of some four hours.

This ancient city is the official headquarters of the civil Government: its fine buildings and the magnificent cathedrals atone for the rather featureless plain in which it stands. It has many lovely buildings, including a small 'palace' of the Duke of Alba, over the doors of which

hangs a chain to show that a King of Spain once slept there, and the Fonseca Palace, now the headquarters of the Irish College, with a noble medieval library. I had the good fortune to meet some journalists with whom I was able to talk freely. They felt their isolation from Paris, London and Berlin: papers arrived irregularly, and they had no means of judging the shifting currents and eddies set up by political storms elsewhere. They spoke of the Nuremberg Congress which I had recently witnessed: could not some of the mystical respect for and devotion to work, as such, be grafted upon the deep-rooted old vines of other countries without arousing the war-spirit? There were comparatively few Germans in Nationalist Spain, and they mainly technicians, but they were held in very high repute. The Irish Brigade were ill-led, but were fine soldiers and courageous: some had remained after their fellows had left. The Italians, whether on the Guadarrama or the Santander front, had nothing to be ashamed of; but this was Spain's war, and all the difficulties experienced with mixed forces during the World War were present here in various forms. There had been jealousy between the Regulars, the *Requêtés*, and the Falangistas, not unlike the ill-feeling that had shown itself between Fascist and Regular units in Ethiopia, which did not, however, deprive Italy of the fruits of victory any more than the occasional rivalry between Regular and Australian divisions during the World War. The news from France did not inspire confidence, but a reaction might be near; the French certainly seemed to be awakening to the nature of the forces at work in their midst and were thinking less of the menace of external foes.

I here met Señor Sangroniz, who carries great weight in the counsels of the Generalissimo: he was just recovering from a serious motor accident. He emphasised in conversation the discriminatory effect of the present regime against Nationalist Spain. Two-thirds of the whole

country was behind Franco, yet his agents abroad were not recognised in most countries. Their adherents—the vast majority of Spanish residents abroad—could not get passports from the consuls of Red Spain: their ships were handicapped and many lay ‘under arrest’ in England. Whatever the intentions of France and Britain might be, the result was to discriminate day by day in favour of the Communist element which now enjoyed undisputed predominance in Valencia.

Spaniards resented the transfer to the British flag during the progress of the civil war of ships built and hitherto owned abroad, and manned by foreign crews, and under time charter to the Spanish Government. Surely the British Government could have prevented such abuses from the outset.

Arrangements were made for me to visit the Madrid front by way of the historic towns of Avila and Toledo. The road, though worn in some places by heavy military traffic, was good enough to enable us to maintain a high average speed. To the unpractised eye the soil seemed arid, but the crop, mainly a good hard, ‘dry’ wheat, thrives with little rain, and the harvest this year has been exceptionally good, with the result that the price of food has not risen and is the lowest in Europe on this side of the front line and on the Barcelona-Valencia side the highest. The routine of village life seemed little affected by the war or by the absence of so many young men: the flocks of sheep and goats and the herds of cattle reminded me once more of Persia.

Avila has a long history and great charm, for its walls are intact and little restored. It suffered much before occupation by General Franco’s forces, but in neither respect can it compare with Toledo, where we slept on our return from the Madrid front at Leganes, less than an hour’s distance. This sector was not active at the time of my visit. The trenches run within half a mile of Madrid and within thirty yards of the front-line trenches

of Madrid's defenders. They were lightly held, but with strong forces in reserve: a graveyard with scores of fresh graves nearby was the only evidence of past activity save for battered buildings and the sort of debris that is common to all wars. The men in the trenches were cheerful, like all good soldiers, and, like all good Spaniards, inclined to be reckless. Their equipment was of the simplest and not all of the best quality, for most of it had been improvised, but the evening meal, which they were about to take, was really good—plenty of meat, vegetables and bread—and the men were at pains to take good care of their weapons. The officers looked a fine lot of men; the grizzled Commandant had learned his trade in Morocco against the very Moors who were now occupying the next lot of trenches, for some of them bore wounds, as he did, received in the last Riff war. The village where the reserves lay was full of Moors and Spanish Regulars, fraternising amiably, for nearly all Moors speak and many write Spanish. But for their distinctive dress they differed little in appearance from Spaniards. I heard many stories of their courage, and of their personal devotion to General Franco. Those who affect to regard them as 'black troops' should compare them with the Senegalese who are to be seen in such large numbers, and who seem so much at home, in Marseilles.

I also met a young man of good family, equally at home in London, Paris and Madrid as his opponents in Moscow, Paris and Madrid, whose perilous task it was to talk daily, at various times from different points, to the occupants of the trenches opposite, telling them the latest home-truths, including current prices of foodstuffs at Salamanca and elsewhere, interspersed with a little good humour. This service has been fully organised and has, I was told, helped to deplete the ranks of Madrid's defenders. The counter-propaganda, whatever its merits, had not, it seemed, induced desertions in the opposite direction.



Returning to Toledo, I visited the Alcazar next morning with Herr Timmermann's epic account of the siege (with an introduction by Yeats-Brown) in my pocket. Good as his account, accurate in every detail, and written with a fine simplicity, it fails to convey to a reader who has not set foot in Toledo on how narrow a stage the whole epic was set. The Alcazar, now used as a Military College, dates from Moorish times: the lower walls are of immense thickness, the upper storeys, built some fifty years ago with steel beams and hollow tile floors, were less solid. I was shown the cellars where the women and children lived and where a child was born. The women were given the chance, before and during the siege, to leave, but refused. Three times mines were exploded beneath them, bringing down hundreds of tons of masonry: the survivors defended what was left; they had little bread: without their horses they would have died of starvation, but would not have surrendered. The commandant, Colonel Moscardó, had 'grown old in the harness,' as Wellington wrote of one of his officers, but many of the garrison were quite young, as the inscriptions on the graves showed. Some bodies were buried in the riding school: when this could no longer be reached they were laid to rest in a great vault which held a little swimming-pool; yet others were placed in niches and hidden from sight by loose piles of bricks. They have not been moved, but the bricks are now set in mortar: it was felt to be a kind of sacrilege to move them to hallowed ground—and cemeteries have of late years been removed from all ecclesiastical control in Spain. This place had been consecrated by the very circumstance of their death.

A little War Museum has already been established: the relics of the siege include the telephone through which Colonel Moscardó was told by those who were investing the Alcazar that his son was in their power, and would be shot if the garrison did not surrender. By its side is

the instrument through which his son heard his father's farewell and his injunction to die bravely with ' *Viva España* ' on his lips. His grave, I believe, is not known.

As I stood before the graves of the cadets, I was reminded of the epitaph in the old and lovely parish church at Sephton, not far from Liverpool, of a midshipman who fell in Beatty's flagship H.M.S. *Lion* with a whole gun-crew in a ' Q ' turret. It was taken from *Macbeth* (v. 8), where Ross addresses Siward.

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt,  
He only lived but till he was a man !  
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd  
In the unshrinking station where he fought,  
But like a man he died.

The words, perfectly fitted to the midshipman, apply equally to Colonel Moscardó's son. They are not less appropriate to the young cadets of the Military School who were the backbone of the garrison and lay buried at my feet.

A young English *requêté* by my side, a volunteer fresh from Cambridge, was not less moved and suggested as an epitaph A. E. Housman's lines :

Here dead lie we because we did not choose  
To live and shame the land from which we sprung.  
Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose,  
But young men think it is, and we were young.

As we went out together into the sunlight we vowed that a little tablet of homage, of English oak or stone, from Englishmen should, if possible, find a place on the wall when the anniversary of the relief of the citadel is next celebrated on September 27. I have since obtained leave, on behalf of a number of Englishmen, to place such a tablet—' *A los héroes del Alcazar, defensores de España verdadera y eterna—Tribute de admiracion inglesa.* ' It is now being cut on English stone in an English village.

In Salamanca I was shown a letter, picked up in an abandoned billet, from a Red militiaman, who was a professional bullfighter in private life, to a friend. It included, as an item of interest, a passage of which the following is a free translation :

Me and my pals were given some priests to do in (*dedicar*, as of a bull in the ring). I put my man through it with my stiletto in the back of his neck, just like a bull. The old swine kicked and struggled under me, and cried ' *Viva Cristo Rey* ' before he pegged out.

Every Spaniard will admit that no race in Europe has been in the past, or still is, more careless of human life, whether their own or of another. Races, like individuals, have the defects of their qualities and the handicaps of ancestry and climate ; but it is noteworthy that deliberate acts of wilful cruelty, committed in cold blood over a period of many months, as part of a settled policy (not necessarily, or even probably, that of the Valencia Government, but of those who pull the strings of the puppets), are not seriously alleged, much less proved, against General Franco's adherents. I will not seek to gratify morbid curiosity by printing here the testimony given me by an Englishman who, fighting for Franco, himself saw the mutilated bodies of his comrades, previously taken prisoners by the militia forces of the Madrid Government, and satisfied himself that what had been done had been inflicted on living flesh. It is sufficient to say that his education, his experience and his upbringing give weight to his evidence. This poison has entered into Spain, as it entered Hungary, from Soviet Russia : whatever its origin, it is idle to deny its existence and vain to deplore it.

On the way back to Salamanca we visited the battle-field of Talavera : the hill on which Wellington watched the battle is marked with an obelisk. I would fain have spent some time there, but rain came down in torrents,

and we took refuge for a space in the village of Santa Ollaya nearby and looked into the church, one of the finest in the diocese, with good fourteenth-century wall paintings. The Red militia had used it as a garage, breaking the wooden floor. They had smashed the stoup at the door, broken and defiled the Madonnas and Christs, put crowbars through a very fine old organ in the loft, and used the altar and reredos as firewood. Some pieces, ready for use, were left in a pile. It was, of course, only one of many hundreds so treated by the same set of men: the ornaments and furniture were doubtless of little intrinsic value. But all churches are not yet museums, and simple folk are less concerned with the intrinsic value of the contents of a place of worship than with their customary significance. They have a potential cash value to the despoilers and an antiquarian interest to our own museum experts. To the parishioners their appeal does not depend on either.

The sight—often repeated—recalled Wordsworth's burning lines 130 years ago:

*Indignation of a High-minded Spaniard*

We can endure that He should waste our lands,  
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame  
Return us to the dust from which we came ;  
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands :  
And we can brook the thought that by his hands  
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,  
For his delight, a solemn wilderness  
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands  
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,  
Of benefits, and of a future day  
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway ;  
*Then*, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak ;  
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare  
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.

On my way from Salamanca to Burgos I stopped for

some hours at Valladolid and paid my respects to the civil authorities and to Monsignor Henson, who has for many years been in charge of the English Catholic College there. He had nothing but praise for the present Government, under which, despite war conditions, the town was happier and better governed than at any time in the past five years. Before General Franco's troops had arrived an attempt had been made, and had almost succeeded, to burn down the college with its valuable library and old portraits. Such events were now things of the past.

General Franco's headquarters are at Burgos, where I spent the night and part of one day and had some conversation with responsible officials. The aftermath of Nyon had aroused feelings, particularly against Great Britain, which were not less bitter because they did not find expression, as in Germany and Italy, in Press diatribes or in loudly voiced protests. The Press and the politicians, great and small, of the Continent have much to learn from nationalistic Spain in this regard. The scrupulous courtesy which, in common with other English visitors, I invariably met with in official circles, whilst it mitigated, could not conceal the feeling of pained surprise that England, of all countries, should have lent herself, in their eyes, to a policy which, whatever its theoretical merits and original intentions, was now unquestionably tending to prolong the civil war and would impose upon Nationalist Spain yet greater sacrifices of men and material. Meanwhile, the peseta in Burgos stands at 48 to the £1, in Barcelona at 250, and food prices are in about the same proportion: yet the Barcelona Government cannot lack gold; it has robbed the banks, it has emptied the safe deposits of private persons; it has exported great sums of gold; it has the mercury mines and the best orange groves.

I had not the honour of being received by General Franco, for, contrary to expectation, he was due to leave for one of the fronts on the following morning. His

burden is very heavy: but for the lamentable accidents which robbed the Nationalists of two other great leaders—Generals Mola and Sanjurgo—it would be easier to bear. On the other hand, as in Great Britain, the very fact that the head of the Government has assumed the responsibilities of office reluctantly, under the pressure not of ambition but of circumstances, adds to the confidence reposed in him by the public. He is no demagogue, and I use the word in no derogatory sense, and his voice is seldom heard on the microphone. His features, his voice, and his public pronouncements differ but little from those of a British Viceroy or Prime Minister. He inspires Spaniards with sober confidence; the Moors hold him in enthusiastic reverence. His Government has 700,000 men under arms: it administers two-thirds of the area and population of Spain, not by force, but through the regular civil administration, which has not been suspended but only supplemented. In no area whence he has expelled the Republican-Socialist-Communist troops has any attempt been made to waylay military convoys or to hamper the administration. The normal life of the countryside has everywhere been resumed.

Why, I was everywhere asked, should we refuse belligerent rights? Why do we refuse to recognise (as Professor H. A. Smith has pointed out in *The Times* of September 18) that lawlessness at sea is the ineluctable consequence of such a refusal? Our reluctance to envisage a Spain under German and Italian influence was understandable, but I was assured that such fears were unfounded. In no circumstances whatever would Nationalist Spain, traditionalist and patriotic, envisage or consent to accord to any foreign Power rights or immunities on Spanish soil or in the Spanish possessions, all of which are now behind General Franco.

Action provokes reaction: the Nationalist claim, amply documented from wholly independent sources, is

that Spain sought external support only as a consequence of aid lent on a far more extensive scale to those who had seized power in Madrid, for ends and by means never for a moment contemplated by a bemused electorate. Madrid would long ago have been at peace and almost undamaged but for the International Brigade, which a non-intervention policy, honestly conducted by no great Power but ourselves, did not hinder from receiving a steady stream of recruits via Perpignan from Barcelona and elsewhere. The first foreign aeroplanes to reach Madrid were French, the first tanks Russian, and the stream of munitions has never ceased to flow into Barcelona by sea and land. The evidence on this subject is conclusive, and was amply confirmed by statements made in Parliament by Mr. Eden on October 21.

I was assured that withdrawal of foreign volunteers would be acceptable to General Franco if it were possible to apply it impartially to both sides. He had no more, if as many, foreigners on his side than had his opponents: the only difference was that they were in organised units. The difficulties were recognised. The 'red' volunteers were largely exiles—anti-Fascist Italians; anti-Bulgarian Bulgars (sent from Soviet Russia, which was glad to be rid of them), anti-Nazi Germans; a few English and many French Communists, including many 'wanted' by the police. They had no future outside Spain; they could at best be returned only to the country in which they had been living, in 1936, as exiles. They had no passports; many, if not most, had accepted Spanish nationality. Would businesslike Britain arrange a vast concentration camp for them somewhere? If so, where, and who would pay for it?

General Franco's adherents are not ungrateful to Germany and Italy, but emphasised that they came to the aid of Spain only after it became clear that the revolutionaries of Madrid had the energetic support—never for a moment hidden or denied—of Moscow, whose interest

in Spain contrasted strangely with her detachment from or forced indifference to events in the Far East, where war had just broken out. The services of Italy and Germany would be rewarded in the commercial sphere by trade concessions—that was inevitable. In the political sphere there would be no sort of transfer of control in any shape or form over Spanish territory overseas or over the Balearics. Spain wished to be at peace with the world. The one article in the old constitution to which all would agree was that in which Spain renounced all participation in foreign wars. But France to-day was openly siding with one of the parties in the internal conflict which had rent Spain asunder. She had perhaps inflicted deeper wounds on herself than on Spain: her real enemies were not across her frontiers but within her gates, and they owed allegiance solely to the Comintern at Moscow, for which Stalin accepts no responsibility!

I was reminded that the Valencia Government had shown itself ready to use Spanish possessions as counters in the international game and had promised complete independence to the Moors. I may here mention that a leading Moroccan of an ancient and famous family whom I met (not in Spain) told me that the Moorist leaders had replied that they would never desert Franco, but that if he should fail the Valencia Government would discover that independence was not given but taken, and the French Government would discover that the Moroccans had not forgotten that they were once a nation. The border between Spanish and French Morocco existed not in men's hearts but on paper only, and not even Tangier would be unaffected should Monsieur Blum and his Soviet friends encompass Franco's downfall. Present troubles in Morocco, he concluded, will prove a mere rustling of the leaves in the breeze which presages a storm. 'You know the ways of Islam,' he concluded—for it was of Arabia that we had been speaking; 'you know that a war against "anti-God Christians" will unite many;



Lyautey is dead and has no successors. There is fire beneath the ashes, and much to burn nearby.'

A French journalist with whom I made a chance contact discussed the effect on Portugal of a Red Spain, which he regarded as being beyond all question the only alternative to a Traditionalist and Nationalist Spain, whether totalitarian or monarchical. He had been recently in Lisbon; he had unbounded admiration for Señor Salazar, but was convinced that Portugal could not long retain its independence if all Spain came under the Government of Valencia, which had declared its intention of uniting Portugal with Spain as part of an Iberian Soviet Republic. Infection would spread from Portugal to Portuguese colonies now tranquil, and would not stop there; the peace of Africa was bound up with the fate of the Iberian peninsula. He knew Spain and ridiculed the idea that it would be dominated by Italy or Germany, though debts of gratitude and honour could not be entirely ignored; men's memories were short—a fact which accounted for most of the world's troubles to-day. Newspapers and reading had deprived men of the faculty of memory—a typically French generalisation.

The distance between Burgos and Bilbao can be covered comfortably in four hours, for the roads are in first-class condition, despite heavy traffic, and much of the scenery is of great beauty, reminiscent rather of Persia at its best than of anything in Europe. There is the same contrast between the desert and the town, the same bare hills and alluvial plateau, the same indications of scanty rainfall. I nowhere saw troops on the march, but we passed many in lorries and saw a number in the trains which, as there are eleven level crossings between Bilbao and Burgos, I had some opportunity of observing. There are great opportunities here and elsewhere for irrigation on a large scale: of the measures to this end initiated by Primo de Rivera less than one-eighth has been accomplished, for his Liberal successors disowned the schemes.

Just before the Nationalist troops occupied Bilbao, not without bitter fighting—courage is displayed no less by gangsters than by policemen—scores of fine houses and villas in the pleasant suburb of Las Arenas were destroyed by fire. Some of the residents, including a woman about to give birth to a child, perished in the flames: very many others, '*felix opportunitate mortis*,' were seized and shot because they were men of substance, or loyal to such men. Every bridge across the river which divides the city was blown up: four have already been repaired, but to replace one, of bascule construction, will take months. I saw a British ship leaving, laden with ore, and a German ship almost ready to sail: the rolling mills are at work again and conditions seem almost normal. Food is abundant and cheap, the city brightly lighted and foreign trade approaching its pre-war volume.

The road inland is a superb piece of engineering and is everywhere in perfect order. Innumerable bridges, destroyed in order to hinder the advance of General Franco's forces, have been, or are being, rebuilt, but it will be years before the losses caused by senseless incendiarism can be made good. The hatred of Christian emblems then displayed has to be seen to be believed. Village crosses, museum pieces dating from the twelfth century or earlier, lie in fragments; the walls of churches which the patriotism and piety of six hundred years had saved from destruction alone remain to testify to the power of petrol. Arson is rightly treated in Spain (as in Palestine to-day) as a capital crime. To describe those who suffer for this offence, after judicial trial, as 'executed prisoners of war' is not merely misrepresentation but ignorance of the laws of war since the days of Grotius, as embodied in our *Manual of Military Law*.

Guernica is off the main road; it has been the subject of so much discussion that I need only say that no one acquainted, as I am, with the effects of bombardment from the air can doubt that most of the material damage

was caused by wilful incendiarism, and such is the verdict of most Englishmen who have visited the town, including Mr. Douglas Jerrold, my colleague Wing-Commander A. W. H. James, M.P., and Captain Yeats-Brown. Their testimony must be placed against that of others, including Mr. G. L. Steer, who formed a different opinion when, as Correspondent of *The Times*, he visited the place.

I heard something in Bilbao of the vexed question of the children who were taken to England and elsewhere. The local authorities are ready to receive and care for them: nothing in local conditions in Bilbao or Santander justifies their retention in England, where the climate in winter is unlikely to suit them. The provision made for orphan or destitute children, whether their parents are with the Republican-Socialist-Communist forces or not, is, as I myself can testify from personal investigation, excellent. The sense of communal responsibility is strong in Spain: there are many orphans, for large families are the rule, but few are in orphanages.

Alike in Bilbao and Salamanca, Valladolid and Toledo I saw eating-houses set apart and specially furnished for children where two square meals a day are provided for orphans and for children of families in which the breadwinner is fighting on either side, or a captive or refugee. Clothing is also provided, and voluntary committees in each ward ensure as far as possible that no child is homeless or neglected as a consequence of the civil war.

The world does not yet know, and perhaps will never learn, the full extent of the tragedy of the Spanish children who have been expatriated, often without the consent, sometimes without even the knowledge, of their parents and guardians from Santander and Gijon to Soviet Russia. They were driven on board in thousands: their whereabouts is unknown, though report has it that they were taken to Odessa. No word from them has reached Spain; there is not even a list giving their names and those of their parents. Some went to Belgium, some to France

and to England, generally but not always with the unwilling consent of their parents. I was shown letters from 'The Basque Children's Committee' to parents offering to return them if the parents paid the cost of their passage to Bilbao—a gesture which has served in some cases to turn gratitude into bitter resentment.

Some, even in England, have been sedulously indoctrinated with hatred of the government under which their parents are indubitably destined to live<sup>1</sup>—that of General Franco—and frightened with stories of what would befall them when they returned. If such things are possible in this country, what is likely to be happening in Russia?

The children are at last being repatriated from England—very slowly. The welcome accorded to those who have returned would have been mingled with a real sense of gratitude to their benefactors in this country had less reluctance been shown, in sending them back, to recognise the plain fact that Bilbao is as good a place for children as anywhere in Europe.

The road from Bilbao follows the coast line for some miles before turning inland into the Basque country—fertile, prosperous, and mountainous, as beautiful as any part of Spain, with a population as versatile, as hardy and, at bottom, as peaceable as any in the Peninsula. The Basque is an aboriginal Spaniard, just as the Welsh are aboriginal 'Brittish,' as they used to be called in Acts of Parliament: they are rightly proud of their institutions, but the genuine demand for independence or even for autonomy is not stronger than in Wales or Scotland, and for the same reasons. General Franco has, however, explicitly undertaken to accord responsible local government, here and elsewhere, so far as is consistent with the principle of a united or unitarian State. Separation or Federalism is not advocated by more than one man in

<sup>1</sup> The *Newcastle Journal* of December 13 mentions that thirty Spanish children were on the platform from which a Socialist M.P. was speaking on the position in Spain, and 'formed a background.'

ten: the vast majority are to-day on the side of the Nationalists, and their dialect is heard far more often in Franco's trenches than ever in those of Valencia.

San Sebastian is the southernmost outpost of cosmopolitan and pleasure-seeking Europe. It suffered little from fire, but not a few of its leading inhabitants were murdered in cold blood. It is prosperous now; officers and men (for whom an admirable institute exists—a happy blend of Y.M.C.A. and casino) on leave from the various fronts, wounded and invalids, rub shoulders with newspaper correspondents and *rastaquères*. It was near here that the aged Argentine Ambassador, a figure worthy of the Court of the Third Empire, replied to a Communist demand for the surrender of two *falangistas* who were in his house by showing himself with an arm round each, saying, 'If you shoot them, you will shoot me.'

The last section of my journey was to Hendaye through Irun where, only a few miles from the French frontier, the most casual traveller can see with his own eyes the ravages of the disease which attacked Spain fifteen months ago at a moment when her powers of resistance had been enfeebled by the latest of a long series of events the historical significance of which has yet to be assessed.<sup>1</sup> Here he will see the gaunt frames of tenements and mansions, churches and public buildings, which were burned by gangs working on lines prescribed by their Moscow-trained leaders as best calculated to inspire terror and strike despair into men's hearts. Here was no resistance to be encountered, no military object to be attained; the perpetrators had little difficulty in finding shelter in French territory.

Twenty-four hours later I was in London.

<sup>1</sup> See an article in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for December 1937, by Professor Pastor.

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